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LD1612141588 [Editorial Report]

Further Reaction to U.S. Decision on PLO

Israeli Reaction—Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir declined to make a statement on the U.S. decision to open talks with the PLO because he did not wish to "needlessly exacerbate the confrontation with the U.S. Administration," IDF radio reported.

According to Jerusalem television, he considered the decision a "grave mistake" and refused to be interviewed about it because he was in a "gloomy mood" over it.

He told U.S. Ambassador Thomas Pickering, who brought him news of the decision, the U.S. move does not contribute to Middle East peace and will encourage terrorism.

Aides to Shamir cited by IDF radio called the meeting between Shamir and Pickering "difficult and unpleasant."

They said Shamir is concerned by the positive reaction to the decision by leading U.S. Jewish figures and views it as the price Israel is paying for plans to amend the law on who is a Jew.

After forming his new government, Shamir plans to present a new political initiative to counterbalance the dialogue between the United States and the PLO, IDF radio noted.

The plan will center around the implementation of unilateral autonomy for the Arab inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres told a news conference broadcast by Jerusalem television that peace remains the central hope for Israel and he believes the conflict between the Arabs and Israelis can be resolved "diplomatically, politically, and peacefully."

He expressed readiness to talk with the Jordanians and Palestinians jointly or individually.

If there is no more shooting and a quiet period of several months begins, Peres promised the Israeli Government will allow free elections in the territories to permit the election of representatives with whom negotiations can then be held, IDF radio disclosed.

Reaction in the territories to Peres' election proposal was "mixed," according to Jerusalem radio.

Moderate Palestinians agreed that any elections in the territories must be coordinated with the PLO.

A Gaza Strip lawyer said the elections will be rejected if new leadership in the territories is viewed as an alternative to the PLO.

AL-FAJR editor Hanna Sinyurah welcomed the call for elections.

Jerusalem radio earlier cited Sinyurah saying the uprising, which paved the way for the current developments, will continue, but without the shedding of blood and undue violence.

The gap between Peres' proposal and Shamir's notion of unilateral autonomy without foreign intervention is not "unbridgeable," IDF radio said.

It further revealed that the recent developments have increased Shamir's desire for a broad-based government and for cooperation with Peres and the Alignment.

Earlier, the radio reported that Peres announced his willingness to accept the finance portfolio, as long as he is bestowed all the powers necessary to heal the economy.

Seven new settlements were established in the territories to create a partition between the Arab populations on either side of the Green Line, as part of the "people's response" to talk of establishing a Palestinian state, Jerusalem radio noted.

Arab Reaction—In a joint news conference in Cairo, Egyptian President Husni Mubarak and Jordan's King Husayn welcomed the U.S. decision, MENA reported.

Husayn said the "ice has melted" and a beginning has been found for the peace process.

A "responsible" source told SPA that the Saudi Government also welcomes the U.S. decision.

The Jordanian paper AL-RA'Y called on the United States to match its dialogue with the PLO with an "effective effort to expedite the convening of the international conference."

PFLP Secretary George Habash considered the U.S. decision "a new victory" to be credited to the uprising, Radio Monte Carlo reported.

The DFLP said the move opens the door for further pressure on the U.S. Administration until it concedes the Palistinian people's national rights, the clandestine Radio Free Lebanon noted.

In negative reaction, the Fatah Provisional Command issued a statement denouncing PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat for making concessions, Radio Monte Carlo disclosed.

The statement added that they will seek to "translate their rejection on the ground."

The clandestine Al-Quds radio aired a commentary accusing 'Arafat of handing the flags of Palestine over to the "American enemy."

The radio also broadcast a statement by the Al-Sa'iqah forces that called 'Arafat's concessions "treasonous and capitulationist" and urged all Palestinians to join forces along the lines of the "nationalist revolutionary revival" engendered by the uprising.

In Libya, the "angered masses" staged demonstrations against 'Arafat's "defeatist" actions, the Voice of the Greater Arab Homeland reported.

Israel: Violence in Territories

Three Nabulus residents were killed and "many" were injured when soldiers fired at a procession of mourners for a youth who died of injuries sustained in demonstrations, Jerusalem radio reported.

An AFP report placed the number dead at five, adding that a sixth person was killed in a nearby village when he was shot in the head by soldiers.

Jerusalem radio also reported violence in East Jerusalem, where seven suspected demonstrators were arrested.

Lebanon

The Voice of Lebanon cited "security and diplomatic" sources that two foreign hostages will be released before Christmas.

Four UNIFIL officers were detained 15 December, in retaliation for the Israeli Army's detention of three pro-Iranian fundamentalists, the radio also reported.

The UNIFIL officers were released after questioning.

Egypt: Cairo Riots

Fifteen more "extremist" elements who had moved to Cairo "to create unrest" were arrested, AL-AHRAM reported.

An Islamic group leader cited by AL-SHA'B said the recent campaign was a result of the regime's uneasiness about the influential role the Adam Mosque is playing in helping citizens and is not in response to citizens' requests for protection from the Islamic groups.

Pakistan

Leaders of the opposition in the National Assembly called for the immediate and unconditional restoration of the Baluchistan assembly, Islamabad radio reported.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto said the action taken by the Baluchistan governor was in accordance with the Constitution and she could not intervene.

The governor defended his actions, saying he had dissolved the assembly based on the advice of the chief minister, because no one party had been able to secure a majority in the assembly.

Palestinian Affairs

'Text' of 'Arafat's Geneva Press Statement

JN1512185488 Baghdad Voice of the PLO in Arabic 1750 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] Brother leader Abu 'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] arrived in Berlin from Geneva at dawn today on an official visit to the GDR lasting several days.

Before leaving Geneva, brother leader Abu 'Ammar held a news conference and read a press statement to reporters. The following is the full text of his statement:

Allow me to explain my viewpoints before you. Our desire for peace is strategic and not a temporary tactic. We work for peace regardless of whatever may happen, whatever may happen.

Our state provides salvation for the Palestinians and peace for both the Palestinians and Israelis. The right to self-determination means the existence of the Palestinians and our existence does not destroy the existence of the Israelis, as their rulers claim.

In my speech yesterday, I referred to UN Resolution No 181 as a basis for Palestinian independence. I also referred to our acceptance of Resolutions 242 and 338 as a basis for negotiations with Israel within the framework of the international cconference.

Our PNC accepted these three resolutions at the Algiers session. Also in my speech yesterday, it was clear that we mean our people's rights to freedom and national independence in accordance with Resolution No 181 as well as the right of all parties concerned with the Middle East conflict to exist in peace and security, including—as I said—the State of Palestine, Israel, and other neighbors in accordance with Resolutions 242 and 338.

Regarding terrorism, yesterday I announced beyond doubt—and nevertheless I repeat for the sake of recording stands, I repeat for the sake of recording stands—that we totally and categorically reject all forms of terrorism, including individual, group, and state terrorism.

We explained our stand in Geneva and Algiers. Any talk to the effect that the Palestinians must offer more—do you remember this slogan—or that what was offered is insufficient or that the Palestinians are playing propaganda games or public relations maneuvers will be harmful and unfruitful. That is enough.

All outstanding issues should be discussed on the table and at the international conference. Let it be perfectly clear that neither 'Arafat nor anyone else can stop the uprising.

The uprising will stop only when practical and tangible steps are taken toward the attainment of its national goals and establishment of its Palestinian state.

Within this framework, I expect the EEC states to play a more effective role in consolidating peace in our region. They assume a political and moral responsibility and they can deal with this.

Finally, I announce before you and ask you to convey these words on my behalf: We want peace, we want peace, we are committed to peace, we are committed to peace, and we want to live in our Palestinian state and let others live. Thank you.

'Source': U.S.-PLO Meeting in Tunis 15 Dec

NC1512162188 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1600 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] Tunis, 15 Dec (MENA)—A reliable Palestinian source has informed the MENA correspondent in Tunis that the PLO and the United States will hold their first official meeting in Tunis tonight.

According to the source, officials from the PLO Executive Committee will represent the PLO at the meeting, while thed U.S. side will be led by Robert Pelletreau, U.S. ambassador to Tunis.

The source did not elaborate on the issues which will be discussed at the meeting.

The U.S. ambassador to Tunis telephoned the PLO office in Tunis this morning and discussed the date on which the talks would begin between the two sides within the framework of the substantive dialogue mentioned by the U.S. State Department.

U.S. Envoy Denies Meeting

LD1512193188 Algiers Domestic Service in Arabic 1830 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Excerpts] [Passage omitted] In a telephone conversation with the APS office in Tunis, the U.S. ambassador denied, through his press attache, that a U.S.-Palestinian meeting was held this evening in Tunis.

The U.S. press attache said diplomats are currently preparing for this meeting, which is scheduled for later. [passage omitted] The U.S. official added that the date, time, and level of the U.S.-PLO meeting has not yet been decided. [passage omitted]

'Source' Says Meeting 16 Dec

NC1512203588 Paris AFP in English 2028 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Excerpt] Tunis, Dec 15 (AFP)—The first official meeting between United States and PLO officials for 13 years will take place here on Friday, probably at the Tunisian Foreign Ministry, official Palestinian sources said here on Thursday.

Talks would open between a Palestinian delegation and U.S. Ambassador to Tunisia Robert Pelletreau, according to Jamil Hilal, the PLO press attache.

PLO Executive Committee members 'Abdallah Hurani and Yasir 'Abd Rabbuh, together with the PLO's representative in Tunisia, Hakim Bal'awi, would be included in the Palestinian delegation, Mr. Hilal said.

Mr. Pelletreau was said earlier by U.S. and Palestinian sources to have made official contact with the Palestine Liberation Front. [passage omitted]

PLO Delegation Formed

NC1512212988 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 2045 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] PLO Executive Committee member 'Abdallah Hurani tonight told the QATARI NEWS AGENCY that the Palestinian delegation to the first meeting between U.S. and Palestinian sides has been formed.

The delegation includes PLO Executive Committee member Yasir 'Abd Rabbuh, PLO Political Department Director 'Abd al-Latif Abu Hajlah, PLO Representative to Tunisia Hakam Bal'awi, and Hurani himself.

Hurani said the meeting will be held at the Tunisian Foreign Ministry within the next few hours, either tonight or tomorrow.

Hurani disclosed that there is no agenda for the meeting with the U.S. ambassador to Tunisia, adding the meeting is being sponsored by the Tunisian Foreign Ministry.

Reaction to U.S. Decision To Begin 'Dialogue'

Welcomed by PNC Chairman

LD1512135588 Kuwait KUNA in English 1321 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] Amman, Dec 15 (KUNA)—The Palestine National Council (PNC) or parliament-in-exile has welcomed the U.S. decision to open dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and declared that the Palestinian leadership would name a delegation to begin preliminary dialogue with the U.S. ambassador in Tunis, PLO's headquarters.

Interviewed by KUNA PNC Speaker Shaykh 'Abd al-Hamid al-Sa'ih said Tunis' dialogue could be geared up to a high Palestinian-American level "if it proved that there was good intentions and a real desire to realize peace in the Middle East."

Al-Sa'ih described the American decision as an "advanced" step as to the U.S. stands towards the PLO. It could have been better if the decision was taken immediately after 'Arafat's historic address at the U.N. However, the delayed U.S. position would not prevent us from appreciating its stand, he said.

It is a positive stand on which we pin hopes as a preamble to comprehensive peace that will realize to the Palestinian people its national rights, self-determination, establishment of their own independent state with Jerusalem as its capital without prejudice to the rights of any neighbouring country to our independent state, he added.

The Palestinian top official said if the U.S. continued to step forward "that will definitely lead to achieving the much desired peace and will thus score a historic victory the world [words indistinct] at comprehensive peace which would terminate the Arab-Israeli conflict and realize the national rights of the Palestinians to establish their independent state on their land away from occupation, suppression or terrorism from any party against our people or against any people."

Al-Sa'ih strongly condemned Israel Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir's statement Thursday in which he regretted the U.S. decision to open dialogue with the PLO. [words indistinct] its position towards the PLO. The Israeli statements show the insistence of Israeli authorities to continue their arrogance and their non-awareness of the requirements of its people in the first place and the requirements of the world in the second place, Al-Sa'ih said.

He called on Israel to mollify its extremist positions which led to long and bitter conflict over the past 40 years, because, he said, such a change will secure its future.

Expresses 'Satisfaction'

JN1612114688 Amman SAWT AL-SHA'B in Arabic 16 Dec 88 p 20

[By Faysal al-Shubul]

[Text] Amman—SAWT AL-SHA'B—PNC Speaker 'Abd al-Hamid al-Sa'ih has expressed satisfaction with the new U.S. decision to open a dialogue with the PLO.

In a statement to SAWT AL-SHA'B, he said this stand deserves appreciation and was awaited by a number of Arab countries that have good relations with the United States, especially after these countries listened to Yasir 'Arafat's speech at the United Nations.

He paid tribute to His Majesty King Husayn's continued efforts, saying his majesty firmly belives in the need for the Arabs to have a common stand to force Israel to change its position in a way compatible with the Palestinian and Arab stand.

Shaykh al-Sa'ih expressed the hope that the new U.S. step will lead to another step toward forming a committee to prepare for the international conference, after which the effective conference that leads to world peace is convened. This is one of the aims of the PLO, according to the PNC resolutions of its latest session, he said.

He said: If our hopes in the United States, based on its new decision, are to be fulfilled, we hope it will take the effective measures that force Israel to change its position, represented by its arrogance, intransigence, and negligence of the world community's demand for a genuine peace that enables everyone to enjoy human rights.

Answering a question on the Israeli Government's position toward the new U.S. step, he said: Our position is clear. We can never abandon any form of our struggle unless the occupation is removed.

The blessed uprising of our people and our struggle are continuing. The Israeli authorities have to develop their stand and present things that conform with the Arab stand.

DFLP on 'Victory'

LD1512172488 Kuwait KUNA in English 1550 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] Damascus, Dec 15 (KUNA)—"The U.S. decision of direct dialogue with the PLO is another victory by the popular Palestinian uprising," the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) Thursday said.

The DFLP spokesman, commenting on the U.S. [word indistinct] said the new American position was resulted form the ongoing Palestinian struggle inside the occupied lands and the increasing Arab and international support for recent PNC's resolutions in Algeria particularly the promulgation of the independent Palestinian state.

Rejecting to bow to the U.S. pressure the latest of which was showed in the message of the U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz to the PLO, also contributed to such a stance.

The front urged the PLO leadership to accelerate formation of the provisional government to gain more international recognition of the declared-Palestinian state, isolate the Israeli position and put pressure on the U.S. Administration.

The popular struggle front "Al-Nadhal" [as received] also welcomed the U.S. decision and gave credit for the continued Palestinian uprising for such an American step.

PFLP, DFLP Reaction

JN1512182288 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1718 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] PFLP Secretary General George Habash has welcomed the U.S. decision and considered it a victory for the uprising in the occupied territories. He called on the citizens in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to continue and escalate the uprising to force the U.S. Administration and Israel to recognize the Palestinian state, as he said.

The DFLP, led by Nayif Hawatimah, considered the decision a U.S. retreat and an international victory to be added to the uprising. The DFLP believes that this decision will allow for exerting new pressures on the U.S. Administration to reply positively to the need for a comprehensive solution within the framework of an international conference.

Commenting on the statement by Yasir 'Arafat in Geneva yesterday, the DFLP spokesman stressed that any statements or clarifications of the bases set by the PNC regarding the convocation of the international conference express only the opinion of those who make them, that they are not binding on the PLO, and that they do not reflect its official stand.

The spokesman reiterated the call for abiding accurately by the PNC resolutions.

U.S. Decision 'Positive Step'

JN1512200088 Baghdad Voice of the PLO in Arabic 1756 GMT 15 Dec 88

[News analysis]

[Text] Brothers: The official U.S. decision to start a dialogue with the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, was welcomed by our Palestinian people in all positions of the uprising and the diaspora.

Although the U.S. Government's official decision came late, it represents a positive step, which the Palestinian people hope will lead to U.S. recognition of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and the establishment of their independent state as approved by the PNC during its recent historic session in Algiers.

The U.S. decision was announced following the Palestinian, Arab, and international (?confirmation) of the context of the important political speech of brother leader Abu 'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] before the UN General Assembly on the 13th of this month, which convinced the world, particularly Western European states, of the equanimity and strength of the Palestinian peace attack, which is based on right and justice.

If the Palestinian peace attack has created the conviction in the world's countries that the logic of right and justice must in the end win, our Palestinian people hope that the United States will take this conviction seriously, which the PLO has always called for.

It is enough to say that 154 states [words indistinct]. Our Palestinian people hope the United States will seriously take the [words indistinct]. The Palestinian people's leader, brother Abu 'Ammar, said in his 1974 speech before the United Nations, and also in his speech this year before the United Nations in Geneva: Peace starts from Palestine and war starts from Palestine.

In any case, we hope the U.S. decision to accept holding contacts with the PLO will be the beginning of a U.S. awareness of its responsibilities toward peace. [Passage indistinct].

The continuous international recognitions of the young Palestinian state, which now numbers 75 states, and the increasing support for it have put the U.S. Administration face to face with this distinguished event—the proclamation of the Palestinian state and the continuous international recognition of it.

This has increased U.S. isolation and made the United States appear not to be seriously interested in the achievement of just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

On the Palestinian level, we recall to mind that brother leader Abu 'Ammar has taken his historic resolutions [words indistinct] and presented the Palestinian peace initiative—'Arafat's initiative for peace, which is based on right and justice.

Abu 'Ammar has succeeded in convincing the whole world of the equanimity and seriousness of the Palestinian peace initiative.

On the U.S. level, it was clear to the U.S. Administration that its clear, declared decision [word indistinct] in dealing in a positive or negative manner with the Palestinian question [passage indistinct].

The question now is: Who will dare take an Israeli decision or stand toward the Palestinian question?

In any event, the U.S. decision received different but continuous reactions. In Tunis, the PLO, through its official spokesman, welcomed the U.S. step. His Eminence Shaykh al-Sa'ih, PNC speaker, has described the U.S. decision as wise, hoping that the United States will become aware of its responsibilities toward peace.

The Egyptian reaction was very positive and welcoming.

In Israel, Knesset member [name indistinct], who is one of the so-called Labor Party doves, has called on the party institutions to convene to discuss Washington's decision to open a dialogue with the PLO. [passage indistinct].

Knesset member [name indistinct], member of MAPAM, has said: We have been waiting for this day. The achievement of peace between Israel and the Palestinians is very close now.

The Peace Now Movement said that the government must not wait until it is subjected to international and U.S. pressures and must immediately stop settlement in the occupied territories.

Knesset member Amnon Rubinstein, leader of the Shinuy Movement, urged the Israeli Government to begin contacts with the PLO. The Democratic Front for Peace and Equality—HADASH—has praised Washington's decision and urged Shamir's government to change its position and begin negotiations with the PLO on the bases of recognizing the Palestinian people's rights to establish their state.

In the so-called Israeli rightist camp, Minister Moshe Arens, who is one of the Likud's leaders, has expressed the opinion that a negative turning point has taken place in the U.S. stands, but, he said:

One must not think that there is any substantial change in relations between Israel and Washington. Arens believes Israel must now begin a media campaign [passages indistinct]. This is a result of stopping settlement.

Racist Knesset members Yuval Ne'eman and Ge'ula Kohen, from the Tehiya Movement, considered the decision a dangerous one that shows the government's impotence in continuing [word indistinct].

Brothers: There remains one word to be said about the most distinguished fact that is embodied now on the land of Palestine—that is the intifada [uprising].

Intifada has entered the dictionaries of all languages, foremost of which is the dictionary of international political language. It was first expressed by the birth of the young Palestinian state and the continuous Arab and international recognition of it.

This tangible progress in the U.S. decision, which was announced this morning, to open [words indistinct] dialogue with the PLO and what this represents of a U.S. step to begin understanding the justice of the Palestinian cause, which is being embodied now by the uprising.

The continuation and escalation of the uprising will create more facts. The uprising (?will not retreat) and will continue, God willing, until the inevitable victory.

'U.S. Dam Has Collapsed'

JN1512203588 Baghdad Voice of the PLO in Arabic 1844 GMT 15 Dec 88

["Talk of the Uprising" feature: "The Facts of the Palestinian Struggle Shine in the Time of Uprising"]

[Text] To the masses of our heroic people throughout the raging homeland; to our giant generations, our revolutionary youths, popular committees, strike forces, youth committees, and all national frameworks and institutions:

Greetings to your great struggle, sacred sacrifices, and creative deeds, which astonished the world. Here we are, through our continuous march toward national independence, beginning a triumphant stage and entering another triumphant stage.

The whole world admits and acknowledges that the Palestinians are right, that their objectives are not only just but possible, and that Palestinian independence and the establishment of the independent State of Palestine on the national Palestinian soil constitute the right way to peace, stability, and tranquility in this part of the world, where there have been conflagrations for a number of years.

The blessed uprising and its daily heroic deeds represent the bright light that lit facts for all sides, shattered enemy illusions, and entrenched the Palestinian facts so as to enter deep into every conscience, heart, and mind.

In light of this, the whole world went to Geneva to listen to Yasir 'Arafat, who spoke about the Palestinian right and peace and about the brave Palestinian decision.

Praise be to God, Palestinian blood, which has been spilled throughout years and become bright throughout the days of the uprising, which has entered its 2d year—this sacred Palestinian blood has not gone to waste. In fact, it is the miraculous force that made the world listen carefully to the voice of the Palestinian right and logic.

If our Zionist enemies have thus far protected themselves by this dam that is represented by the U.S. bias toward them, then this U.S. dam has collapsed as a result of the great Palestinian steadfastness, action, and heroic deeds.

As a result of this, the United States has become isolated before the whole world. It could nothing but what it has done; namely, to recognize the Palestinian fact, represented by the PLO, with which the United States has accepted holding direct talks.

Thus, an aggressive dam on the road has collapsed. Other dams will collapse and the Palestinian struggle will continue until the occupation is deterred, independence is entrenched, and the flags of our state fly high over our state.

O our heroic steadfast people, giant generations, and revolutionary youths, this great victory, through which the United States was forced to make this frank announcement of accepting direct talks with our valiant PLO, necessitates that we all strengthen our unionist course for the sake of national unity, reinforce our democratic march, escalate our great struggle, and prepare ourselves to shoulder all the responsibilities necessitated by the new stage.

Our leader Abu 'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] has said we are in the last quarter of the hour; that we are knocking on the doors of victory; that we are at the steps of the Palestinian homeland; and that further struggle, escalation of the uprising, further sacrifices, and expanding confrontations will bring our objectives and our inevitable victory closer.

Greetings to you, O our valiant people and our blessed uprising. It is a revolution until victory.

Bush 'Behind' New Policy

NC1512202088 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 2000 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] Hani al-Hasan, political adviser to Palestinian leader Yasir 'Arafat, has stated that U.S. President-elect George Bush was behind the new U.S. policy toward the PLO.

In an interview with REUTER, Al-Hasan praised President-elect George Bush and said he expects the Middle East problem to be resolved during his term of office.

'Effective Accomplishment' Hailed

JN1512214988 Baghdad Voice of the PLO in Arabic 1957 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Station commentary: "The Logic of the Palestinian Struggle Wins the Wager"]

[Text] O brothers, O sons of our great Palestinian people, O sons of our glorious Arab nation:

Following the passage of less than 1 month after the day on which Yasir 'Arafat stood at the conference hall in Algiers announcing the independence document and the birth of the independent Palestinian state—we say that after the passage of less than 1 month from this occasion, the courageous and persistent Palestinian struggle has managed to score a new highly important and extremely effective accomplishment represented by the U.S. Administration's announcement of its acceptance of direct talks with the PLO, considering that this direct dialogue with the PLO is the only way to achieve peace in the region.

In this regard, we would like to recall that this positive stand of the U.S. Administration, which we strongly welcome, has not come about easily and has not crystallized without the hard labor experienced by the Palestinian struggle while demonstrating a unique courage.

It suffices to say, for example, that the U.S. Administration prevented brother Abu 'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] from delivering his speech at the UN General Assembly in New York—a thing that created developments that resulted in moving the debate to Geneva where brother Abu 'Ammar delivered his speech there announcing the Palestinian peace initiative which has won the interest and the welcome of the entire world.

The U.S. Administration had to take into account the large-scale support won by Palestinian logic throughout the world—logic that is not only based on a genuine desire to make peace but also on a gigantic ability to create deeds and score accomplishments in the arena of struggle, either through the blessed uprising, which has entered its 2d year, or through the ability of Palestinian action to communicate with other arenas.

The Palestinian peace initiative proclaimed by brother Abu 'Ammar in Geneva was received by the United States in this positive manner, thus announcing its acceptance of a direct dialogue with the PLO.

All this was met with negativity and evasion by Israel, as Shim'on Peres announced that the U.S. announcement is tantamount to a day of sadness for Israel. Yitzhaq Shamir announced his categorical rejection of the Palestinian peace initiative.

We would like to reiterate that the continued pursuit of the policy of evading realities being advocated and followed by Israel can never yield any useful results.

Israel's continued pursuit of a policy that seeks to provide protection for itself through the perpetration of violent and terrorist practices will further exacerbate the situation.

Besides, the experience of past years as well as the experience of the uprising itself prove beyond any doubt that Israel has no choice but to recognize the realities brought about by the persistent Palestinian struggle and to respond to the wide horizons contained in the Palestinian peace initiative announced by brother Abu 'Ammar before the international community in Geneva.

We would like to reiterate that brother Abu 'Ammar has called upon the Israelis themselves to come forward and leave fear and evasion behind themselves so as to contribute to creating the peace of the courageous.

Does Israel have right now people with the ability, the courage, and effeciency to take this road? Will the status that has been maintained for years continue to prevail? We are here referring to fear; hesitation; the pursuit of evasive policies; and the search for protection using screens of steel, fire, terrorism, and crazy hatred harbored against the children, women, youth, and elderly throughout our Palestinian territory.

The Palestinian people, represented by the PLO, have wagered that the just, persistent struggle will bring about further positive changes as regards the way the Palestine question is viewed by the world and also as regards the solution to be found to this Palestine question.

Here are the Palestinians winning the wager one round after the other, as they have been continuing their heroic struggle on the one hand and responding favorably to the latest developments and changes on the other.

Thus, they will never be isolated for one moment from the givens of the world around them. Do the Israelis have this ability? Or will they continue to blind themselves, lend deaf ears, and continue to proceed ahead toward the dead end as they are doing right now?

We wish to see the Israelis respond favorably to Yasir 'Arafat's call to contribute toward creating the peace of the courageous. We also wish to see this response take place as soon as possible and to see the Israelis stop clinging to delusions.

Until this happens, our struggle in the arenas of struggle will continue and our initiatives will continue until the genuine peace is consummated by the establishment of our independent Palestinian state, as this is the only prelude to peace.

Arab Efforts Praised

JN1612114088 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 16 Dec 88 p 18

[By Jamal al-'Alawi]

[Text] Amman—PLO Executive Committee member Muhammad Milhim has said the success of the ongoing efforts to hold an ordinary summit in Riyadh with Egypt's participation will effectively speed up the convening of an international conference and will also prompt the United States to genuinely move in order to end the Arab-Israeli conflict.

In a statement to AL-DUSTUR, Milhim added: The approach toward a just peaceful solution adopted by the PLO is a strategic approach and is not considered a political tactic.

Commenting on the U.S. stand on holding a dialogue with the PLO, he said: The U.S. stand was made as a result of the international detente and the wide support for the Palestine question, which was manifested by voting in favor of transferring the discussions on it to Geneva.

He pointed out that this wide support was one of the fruitful results of the accumulated Palestinian struggle, which was crowned by the uprising in the occupied territories, and also by virtue of consolidating the Palestinian national unity in the two [as published] recent PNC sessions in Algiers.

Milhim asserted that this U.S. stand has been brought about thanks to the reduction of Arab differences as a result of the efforts exerted by His Majesty King Husayn, Egyptian President Husni Mubarak, Iraqi President Saddam Husayn, King Fahd, custodian of the two holy mosques, and other Arab leaders who moved to lessen inter-Arab differences and some Arab-Palestinian differences in order to prepare the atmosphere for holding the postponed ordinary Riyadh summit.

Milhim said the new U.S. stand will leave Israel alone facing the whole world as well as a new U.S. approach toward finding a peaceful solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

He pointed out that the outcome of this approach depends on complete removal of Arab differences and on our people's continuation of their gigantic uprising, which rejects and resists occupation.

PNC Deputy Speaker Comments

NC1612115588 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1114 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] Kuwait, 16 Dec (MENA)—PNC Deputy Speaker Salim al-Za'nun, alias Abu al-Adib, has welcomed the United States' decision to start a dialogue with the PLO. He viewed this step as a return to justice and implementation of the UN resolutions, which the United States, among others, ratified.

He said this step is a victory for the peace march, which the Palestinian people initiated in the Palestinian territories a year ago. He attributed the reason for the U.S. decision to the PLO's active political move and the efforts exerted by certain Arab countries.

In statements to a MENA correspondent in Kuwait, Al-Za'nun said: We are at the threshold of an international peace conference, calling for the convening of an urgent Arab summit conference to draw up a unified policy to keep pace with the Palestinian march and to prompt countries to help convene an effective international conference.

He expected Israel to launch a feverish move to belittle and stall the U.S. decision.

Al-Quds Radio Scores 'Arafat, 'American Enemy'

JN1512170688 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1508 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Unattributed talk]

[Text] O masses of the valiant uprising: 'Arafat's UN speech was camouflaged with some sort of emotional performance containing all the concessions asked for by the U.S. Administration.

This happened with the aim of deceiving the Palestinian citizen, who has discovered two points.

The first is that the U.S. Administration refused to grant 'Arafat an entry visa to give the impression that the United States is standing against him so he could play with this asset after his speech.

The second is that the U.S. Administration also wanted to replenish this asset to achieve two goals:

The first is to project him as a politician who does not respond to U.S. demands and the second is to gain enough time to measure the Palestinian and Arab people's reaction to what he offered in his UN speech—a speech whose text was known to the Americans even before it was delivered as reported by those who are aware of the mechanics of the shuttle of 'Arafat's speech to the Americans and back to him once again.

Because 'Arafat is in a hurry to reap the fruits of his treasonous and capitulatory trend on the American level, at least in this stage, he held his press conference in Geneva and said what he had kept in his mind for a long time.

He said in unequivocal terms that he is responding in word and deed to the U.S. demands. 'Arafat said: The PLO recognizes the right of all parties to the Middle East conflict to live in peace and security, including the states of Palestine and Israel and their neighbors.

'Arafat repeated that the PLO recognizes Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, which recognize the right of all Mideast states to live in peace within secure borders.

Therefore, the United States, in turn, responded to 'Arafat's response to its demands and conditions 4 hours after the latter's response and decided to authorize its ambassador to Tunisia, Robert Pelletreau, who speaks Arabic, to hold a dialogue with 'Arafat, stressing at the same time that this development is another step toward direct negotiations.

This is the scene now. It is not an unexpected scene because the beginning portends the end, as the saying goes, and 'Arafat's intentions were known from the Palais des Pins resolutions.

These intentions were uncovered by the radical revolutionary forces 14 years ago when the 10-point program was issued and when 'Arafat spoke about the olive branch at the UN podium, after which he continued the process of brainwashing a large number of Palestinian revolutionary cadres and factions.

As a result, he managed to turn many into a formal opposition that grants him a democratic mask even when he was carrying out assassinations in cold blood, as he did with the martyr artist Naji al-'Ali.

Because this situation is so serious, the radical Palestinian and Arab forces inside and outside Palestine, whose revolutionary vanguard is represented by our people's glorious uprising, are discovering now more than at any time before, that 'Arafat, whether in the Palais des Pins resolutions, his UN General Assembly speech, or his news conference, is only handing the flags of Palestine—its cause, revolution, and uprising—over to the American enemy directly and clearly, as he said.

He is thus preparing to hand them all over to the Zionist enemy on the table of direct talks to realize the Zionist autonomy plan as cited in the Camp David accords.

It is he who is talking about the need to make the peace of the brave. It is he who is talking about the need to exploit this available opportunity which, according to him, will not be repeated.

O masses of our great people, O masses of the heroic uprising, let each of us raise his voice. The revolution is in danger. The uprising is in danger. Palestine is in danger. The Arab nation is in danger.

'Arafat represents only himself. He is now standing alongside the enemy. Victory to the revolution, victory to the uprising, victory to Palestine.

Anti-'Arafat Group Denounces 'Concessions'

JN1512194788 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1700 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] The Popular War Liberation Vanguards—Al-Sa'iqah Forces has issued a statement, in which it said:

The deviationist 'Arafatist line continues to violate and breach the Palestinian national charter and circumvent our people's constants of national struggle, declaring his determination to press ahead with liquidating the Palestinian cause and making concessions to the imperialist-Zionist enemy that covets Palestinian and Arab land.

The revolutionary reality in Palestine as expressed in the valiant popular uprising of our heroic people of all ages has proved that struggle in all forms marks the stronger and surer deterrent against the enemy's plans and projects of usurping our Arab land.

Our people's revolution in Palestine at this juncture marks a true revival that ought not under any circumstances to be dedicated to making concessions and throwing away the national rights of our resisting people.

In his UN General Assembly speech and at a subsequent news conference, 'Arafat made a string of concessions that strike at the heart of our cause.

The most important of these concessions are: the explicit and direct recognition of the existence of the Zionist entity; acceptance of UN Security Council Resolutions Nos 242 and 338; indictment of the Palestinian and Arab armed struggle against the Zionist enemy as terrorism; giving in to extortionist American demands that have dragged him to making concessions; and abolition of the [Palestinian] charter by announcing a contradictory program.

The Popular Liberation War Vanguards—Al-Sa'iqah Forces' statement added: These concessions by the 'Arafat-led deviationist line are binding neither on us nor on our Palestinian people and larger Arab nation.

We in the Al-Sa'iqah organization vigorously denounce the string of the treasonous and capitulationist concessions made by 'Arafat to the Zionist enemy and American imperialism.

We declare our adherence to the Palestinian national charter as well as to the objectives of the national struggle of liberation, repatriation, self-determination, and Palestinian statehood on all the national soil of Palestine. We declare our adherence to armed struggle as a principal route to liberation.

Given the existing, deteriorating state of affairs in the Palestinian arena, which has been brought about by the deviationist line, we declare that 'Arafat does not represent the PLO, the PNC, or for that matter any PLO institution.

He has no right to speak in their name at any forum. The current PLO, which 'Arafat dominates, making concessions in its name, is no longer the same organization through which we struggled on bahalf of our militant and nationalist objectives.

The Popular Liberation War Vanguards—Al-Sa'iqah Forces' statement says in conclusion:

We urge all the patriotic Palestinian organizations, bodies, and individuals to join forces along the lines of the nationalist revolutionary revival engendered by the uprising-revolution in Palestine with a view to toppling this line and its adherents in the leadership and institutions of the PLO, thwarting all of the projects of the humiliating capitulationist settlement in which 'Arafat is involved and restoring the PLO to its nationalist revolutionary approach committed to the charter and objectives of the Palestinian nationalist struggle.

[Signed] The General Command of the Popular Liberation War Vanguards—Al-Sa'iqah Forces

Fatah Provisional Command Denounces 'Arafat
JN1612063088 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0510 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] The Fatah Provisional Command led by Abu Musa [Sa'id Musa Muraghah] has issued a statement announcing that several Palestinian factions categorically reject what the statement described as 'Arafat's concessions.

The Fatah Provisional Command statement stresses these factions will work to translate their rejection on the ground.

'Court of State of Palestine' Established
JN1612075688 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 0400 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] It was reported in Tunis last night that the PLO's revolutionary judiciary has established the people's court of the State of Palestine. This court will be the basic authority to resolve disputes among the Palestinian people's masses and to pass judgments.

The Palestinian news agency has said the establishment of this court was stipulated in a statement distributed in Bethlehem in the occupied West Bank last night.

The statement says the people's court is one of the judicial cornerstones in the homeland and that the court warns it will pass verdicts on those who still collaborate with the Zionist occupation.

The statement also warns that the court will take the necessary measures against anyone who does not abide by the decisions made by the national leadership of the popular uprising.

Proclamation of Palestinian State Recognized
AU1412163588 Vienna ORF Teletext in German 1617 GMT 14 Dec 88

[Text] Austria recognizes the proclamation of a Palestinian state as the exercise of the right of self-determination by the Palestinian people's legitimate representation.

This was stated by Thomas Klestil, secretary general of the Austrian Foreign Ministry, before the UN General Assembly in Geneva today [14 December].

Klestil called for holding an international Middle East conference under the auspices of the United Nations Organization. He said that hopefully 'Arafat's appeal for peace will not go unheard.

Austrian Envoy To Be Accredited to PLO
AU1412190888 Vienna Television Service in German 1830 GMT 14 Dec 88

[Text] Austria will accredit an ambassador to the PLO government-in-exile in Tunis. The diplomatic rank of the PLO representative in Vienna will be upgraded.

Algeria

Foreign Minister Discusses UN-PLO Session

LD1512195288 Algiers Domestic Service in Arabic 1830 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] Foreign Minister Boualem Bessaieh, who represented Algeria at the UN General Assembly debate on the Palestinian issue, considered the results a victory for the Palestinian cause, the Arab motherland, and the right of peoples to self-determination.

Bessaieh told Algerian journalists in Geneva that the accomplishment of these results was due to the efforts and the wise liaison between Yasir 'Arafat and the Zimbabwean [as heard] foreign minister.

Egypt

Jordan's King Husayn Visits, Meets Mubarak

Arrives From Paris

NC1512153488 Cairo MENA in English 1524 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] Cairo, Dec 15 (MENA)—Husayn of Jordan arrived here this evening from Paris on a short visit for talks with President Husni Mubarak.

King Husayn was received at the airport by President Husni Mubarak and Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi together with all the members of his cabinet.

Officials Attend Talks

JN1512165088 Amman Domestic Service in Arabic 1600 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] Cairo—His Majesty King Husayn and Her Majesty Queen Nur arrived in Cairo this evening on a short visit during which his majesty the king will hold talks with His Excellency President Muhammad Husni Mubarak on the latest developments in the Arab arena and the situation in the Middle East, foremost among which are those pertaining to the Palestine question.

His Excellency President Muhammad Husni Mubarak and Mrs Mubarak led those who welcomed their majesties at Cairo airport. Also on hand to receive their majesties were Prime Minister Dr 'Atif Sidqi, senior civic and military officials, and the Jordanian ambassador in Cairo.

Prime Minister Zayd al-Rifa'i and Royal Hashemite Court Chief Marwan al-Qasim arrived along with his majesty the king

The talks between His Majesty King Husayn and His Excellency President Husni Mubarak began at the president's lounge at Cairo International Airport immediately upon the arrival of his majesty the king and in the presence of the prime minister, the Royal Hashemite Court chief, and the Jordanian ambassador in Cairo.

The talks were attended on the Egyptian side by Prime Minister Dr 'Atif Sidqi; and Field Marshal Muhammad 'Abd al-Halim Abu Ghazalah, Egyptian deputy prime minister and defense and war production minister.

Leaders Discuss 'Peace Process'

NC1512181888 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1735 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] Cairo, 15 Dec (MENA)—At a news conference they held at the Cairo Airport VIP lounge this evening, President Husni Mubarak and His Majesty King Husayn of Jordan welcomed the U.S. decision to begin a dialogue with the PLO. President Mubarak stressed that 'Arafat's speech to the UN General Assembly in Geneva was clear and extremely helpful for the peace process. He said that peace concerns Israel as much as it concerns the entire Arab people.

The details of the news conference follow:

In response to a question by a U.S. television network correspondent to both leaders regarding the U.S. decision to start a dialogue with the PLO, the Jordanian monarch expressed his and President Mubarak's pleasure over the U.S. decision. He said: We noticed that progress had been made with regard to the peace process in the recent past. This progress began with the PNC resolutions and 'Arafat's speech to the UN General Assembly in Geneva, which clarified before the international community the position of 'Arafat, the Palestinians in general, and their desire to achieve peace.

King Husayn said: All of us were happy with 'Arafat's speech. We also are happy with the efforts we have exerted and continue to exert to achieve peace. He expressed hope that these efforts will result in the achievement of peace in the Middle East.

President Mubarak said: "I believe that His Majesty King Husayn's answer to this question is sufficient. I have nothing to add." We are all working for peace. He pointed out that the U.S. decision to initiate a dialogue with the PLO is a positive and fair one. We would like the United States to continue with the peace process, he said, noting that the only way to achieve this is to return to the Palestinians the land that was occupied in 1967 so that peace can be established in the entire region.

Asked what role Egypt can play through its contacts with Israel to change the latter country's stand toward the peace process, President Mubarak said: Egypt has contacts with Israel and the United States has a key role in influencing Israel's policy. The cooperation between us,

as an Arab nation, and the cooperation between me, His Majesty King Husayn, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the Arab states concerned have a direct bearing in changing Israel's policy.

President Mubarak added: The European community also has a great influence on Israel. Thus, when the Arabs cooperate with the European community and with all the states that want peace in the region with the aim of influencing Israel's policy, Israel will understand that there will be no peace, no solution, and no stability in the region without a solution to the Palestinian problem. Everyone will give in to the reality, which is the achievement of permanent peace in the region.

Asked how he envisages the peace process in the coming period, His Majesty King Husayn said: I believe activity has begun on the road to a solution and the work for peace will accelerate. I believe the direct U.S.-Palestinian dialogue, which is about to begin, as all of us have heard, is a very important thing.

King Husayn added: Naturally, the situation has become clear with regard to the desire to achieve peace through the convening of an international conference with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council and all the parties to the conflict, including the PLO, the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

King Husayn continued: Everyone is working to implement UN Resolutions 242 and 338 to solve the Palestinian issue in all of its aspects and to achieve a just and lasting peace.

King Husayn said: I believe the peace process has begun and we will see it accelerate in the near future, God willing.

Asked what could be expected from the talks between Washington and the PLO, King Husayn said: I believe that the ice has melted. For the past 3 years I interceded now and then, whenever the opportunity arose. I am now pleased that the PNC and the PLO, thanks to Yasir 'Arafat's speech and the PNC resolutions, have paved the way to a dialogue.

The Jordanian monarch said: Now, a beginning has been found for the peace process. It is very important for us and I hope it will continue. Soon we will see our efforts bearing fruit and a dear and cherished objective, that of bringing peace to the Middle East, coming true.

Asked about the success of Egypt's quiet diplomacy and the U.S. agreement to hold a dialogue with the PLO, President Mubarak said: I recall my meeting in Al-'Aqabah with His Majesty King Husayn and PLO leader Yasir 'Arafat, and the consultations and discussions we had over the Palestinian problem. Following this meeting the PNC convened and issued the resolutions. These were very important and responsible resolutions which gave a stimulus to the peace process.

After that, Yasir 'Arafat was scheduled to address the UN General Assembly in New York. Following the U.S. decision not to grant him an entry visa, the meeting was shifted to Geneva through Arab and international efforts. There, 'Arafat gave his speech, which I believe was very clear and helpful to the peace process.

Mubarak stated that 'Arafat said everything that could be said in his comprehensive speech, which was useful to the peace process. Therefore, the United States made a decision to hold contacts with the PLO. Today the first contact between the U.S. Embassy in Tunis and the PLO Headquarters took place.

President Mubarak said: I believe that all of this is a good sign which we, as an Arab nation, as well as the PLO, must make use of. The PLO also must remain united so that no statements opposing the peace process shall be issued here or there.

I am confident that all of them will live up to their responsibility so that we can push the peace process forward and so that the international conference can convene on the basis of Resolutions Nos 242 and 338, which all of us have approved, as 'Arafat mentioned in his speech before the UN General Assembly in Geneva.

President Mubarak added: Accordingly, the peace process will continue. Israel's stand is the only stand that is currently obstructing the peace process. Shamir does not want the peace process to move forward.

Mubarak said: If Shamir wants peace in the region, we all must proceed in the peace process. We can never attain peace unless we give the Palestinian people their land. He explained that peace is important to Israel and the Israeli people, just as it is important to the whole Arab people. We must give the Palestinian citizens who have lost their land a land to live on and to establish their state on.

President Mubarak said: I believe that without this, we cannot realize peace or security in the region. He stressed that the only course is the convening of an international conference, which will be held, God willing.

Responding to another question on the sudden change in the U.S. policy, President Mubarak said: I have said this several times before—the United States was waiting to hear 'Arafat's word, and, in his speech, 'Arafat recognized Security Council Resolutions Nos 242 and 338 as a basis for convening an international conference for peace. 'Arafat also repeatedly renounced terrorism and emphasized Israel's right to exist. Mubarak added that 'Arafat's statements were quite sufficient to make the United States begin contacts with him.

In reply to a question on the current situation vis-a-vis the efforts he is exerting to mend ties between Syria and Egypt and between Syria and Iraq, King Husayn said that the Arab nation will stand together, united in the forseeable future. He stressed: I have absolute confidence in this. He expressed pride over his efforts to clear the Arab atmosphere, saying: "This is a source of pride to me." He stressed that he will continue to do his utmost for the benefit of the Arab nation throughout the greater Arab homeland.

Husayn Departs

NC1512185288 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 1830 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Excerpt] King Husayn of Jordan departed from Cairo this evening, following a brief visit to the Arab Republic of Egypt, during which he held talks with President Husni Mubarak. [passage omitted]

Mubarak, 'Arafat Hold Telephone Conversation

NC1512200388 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1950 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] Cairo, 15 Dec (MENA)—PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat telephoned President Husni Mubarak tonight, following King Husayn's departure from Cairo.

During the conversation, Mubarak and 'Arafat reviewed developments concerning Palestinian moves, as well as international reaction to the PNC resolutions which were presented at the UN General Assembly session in Geneva.

It is worth mentioning that 'Arafat is currently on a European tour.

More Commentary on U.S. Decision for Dialogue

Al-Baz on 'Arab Efforts'

NC1612083788 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 0700 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] Dr Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, has described the U.S. decision to hold talks with the PLO as an important step in the right direction. He noted that by making this decision the United States will have corrected part of its policy toward the Middle East, especially toward the Palestinian cause.

In a news conference he gave in Manama last night, Al-Baz said Arab efforts had contributed to influencing the U.S. stand and that what happened was the result of numerous such efforts. The first, he added, was the Palestinian people's action and preservation of their brave uprising in the occupied Arab territories. The Palestinian movement was able to prove its presence when it unified its ranks and forgot its differences. Al-Baz added that these efforts were also represented by President Husni Mubarak's direct contacts with U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz through the hot line between Egypt and Washington, as well as by President Husni Mubarak's written messages to U.S. President-elect George Bush in order to pave the way for a dialogue with the new administration, which officially takes office on 20 January.

U.S. Decision: 'Significant Step'

JN1512202288 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1915 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Excerpt] Manama, 15 Dec (WAKH)—Dr Usamah al-Baz, Egyptian President Mubarak's office head for political affairs and Foreign Ministry first undersecretary, has called the American decision to open a dialogue with the PLO a significant step in the right direction.

The United States has thus corrected part of its Mideast policy, especially where the Palestinian cause is concerned, Dr al-Baz added.

He told a news conference here this evening the American decision is first and foremost procedural since it lacks an undertaking or commitment on Palestine to counterweight undertakings and commitments made to Israel by successive U.S. Administrations. Dr al-Baz cited American commitments to Israel's security and military superiority over the Arab countries.

The Egyptian official indicated that the decision is important insofar as it partly recognizes the soundness of the Palestinian position as crystallized in the recent PNC Algiers session. He pointed out that the United States has laid down conditions for opening the dialogue with the PLO.

Dr al-Baz gave credit to Arab parties that influenced the American position, since this development was the end result of various Arab efforts led by the sustained, valiant Palestinian uprising and the united front presented by the Palestinian factions, which proved enlightened by sinking their differences. [passage indistinct]

Newspapers' Reaction Sampled

NC1612073888 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2305 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] Cairo, 15 Dec (MENA)—Tomorrow's Cairo dailies devote their front pages and editorials to examining reactions to the sudden U.S. decision to hold talks with the PLO. The dailies agree that recent efforts by President Husni Mubarak succeeded in persuading the U.S. Administration to foresake its rigid positions and enter into a dialogue with the PLO.

The dailies note that President Mubarak sent three urgent messages to U.S. President Ronald Reagan and Secretary of State George Shultz over the past 10 days, urging them to engage in an immediate dialogue with the PLO in order to preserve the peace momentum. President Mubarak also talked for 15 minutes on the telephone with Shultz and stressed the need for the United States to respond favorably to the Palestinian stand.

Headlines of the three major Cairo newspapers reflect their interest in this topic. AL-JUMHURIYAH carries the headlines: "Mubarak Behind the U.S. Decision" and "The Story of the Contacts on the Hot Line Between Cairo and Washington." AL-AKHBAR's main banner reads: "The Secret of the Sudden Shift in the U.S. Position." The main headline of AL-AHRAM cites President Mubarak's words: "Peace Is As Important to Israel As It Is to All the Arabs."

AL-AHRAM's editorial, entitled "An Achievement for Mubarak and 'Arafat," says that quiet Egyptian diplomacy, skillfully managed by President Husni Mubarak, can take pride in what was achieved over the past few hours. A radical change took place in the U.S. position only a few hours after President Mubarak telephoned George Shultz and urged him to adopt a positive stand vis-a-vis the recent Palestinian moves.

AL-AHRAM says that Palestinian leader Yasir 'Arafat and his colleagues in the PLO should take pride in what they have achieved, and in having refuted all the claims which used to prevent the United States from a dialogue with the PLO.

The new position adopted by the United States, which acknowledges the positive points of the Palestinian move toward peace, should encourage more efforts and prompt the Palestinians to press ahead with the peace offensive which has gained world-wide attention and support.

AL-AHRAM says that the U.S. response has destroyed old policies and futile tendencies to support Israel, regardless of whether that country is right or wrong. The PLO, therefore, should consolidate its peace offensive so as to reach further inside the United States and win over the enlightened elements of the U.S. public opinion.

The PLO, AL-AHRAM says, has refuted the pretexts and excuses with which the U.S. Administration used to justify its refusal to talk to the PLO. The United States, AL-AHRAM writes, has come to see how mistaken it is to give blind support to Israel while rejecting the olive branches which 'Arafat took with him to Geneva.

Washington could have lost its credibility before the nations of the world which welcomed the speech by 'Arafat and applauded his clear vision of a real peace in the Middle East.

AL-AHRAM notes that the United States had to ponder certain questions and to seek clear answers to them. The Americans must have asked themselves certain questions before they undertook their daring move, the paper says. Chief among these questions are: What could Washington demand from the PLO and its leader Yasir 'Arafat after the PLO announced with all clarity that it recognizes the State of Israel?

What could Washington demand from 'Arafat after he openly declared that the PLO accepts UN Security Council Resolutions Nos 242 and 338 as a basis for holding the international peace conference? What could Washington demand from the Palestinians after they announced their absolute rejection of all forms of terrorism?

AL-AHRAM adds: We do not believe that Washington wanted 'Arafat to announce his recognition of Israel and relinquish the demand of a Palestinian state, nor do we believe that Washington wanted 'Arafat to declare his acceptance of the UN resolutions without entailing any commitments on the part of Israel. It continues: We do not imagine that Washington wanted 'Arafat only to renounce terrorism and abandon all acts of legitimate resistance in the occupied territories.

Washington cleverly realized that such matters will not be accepted by any one, because no one could ask the Palestinians for more than 'Arafat had offered as a bold struggler and responsible statesman. The paper notes that Israel's attempts now to abort the U.S.-Palestinian rapprochement are not in the interest of the peace desired in the region.

It says: We hope that the Government of Israel will reconsider its accounts well and realize the dangers of shutting the door against the Palestinian flags of peace. We also hope that all the peace-loving powers within Israel will assume their role in letting the United States know that not the entire Israeli public stands by the racist inclinatioans, which reject peace and hold the reins of the decision-making process.

The paper concludes: If this golden opportunity for peace is missed, then no one will blame the Palestinians. Rather, all the blame will be on Israel, whose stand has become strange, isolated, and unjustified.

For its part, AL-AKHBAR newspaper describes the U.S. decision to initiate a dialogue with the PLO as an important step in the right direction, which no force, no matter how big or influential, can disregard. The paper notes that the international gathering at the UN General Assembly session in Geneva and the last minute contact between President Husni Mubarak and U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz were the leading reasons prompting the U.S. Government to adopt a new stand.

The paper says this decision is a first and fundamental step to break the fictitious barrier which former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger established more than

13 years ago to close all bridges of communications between the United States and the PLO and curb any moves to establish a durable peace in the Middle East.

The paper points out that this decision was no surprise to those who still had a spark of hope that the United States would retreat from its insensible position, especially after all the PLO resolutions in which it clarified and asserted its desire for a lasting peace and peaceful coexistence on its legitimate land. In conclusion, the paper expresses hope that the process will continue on this course without any impediment to correct the mistakes and restore the right to its claimants.

In its editorial entitled "What After the Historic Victory," AL-JUMHURIYAH asserts that the new U.S. step is more than just an encouraging move. Rather, it is a return to U.S. credibility, which fulfills the Arab wish expressed by President Husni Mubarak, and which Egypt sought to achieve through intensive and sincere Arab coordination.

The Arabs have seen the need for Washington to encourage those who desire to establish peace and pursue its difficult course to achieve security and stability for all the region's countries. The paper describes the U.S. decision as a historic triumph accomplished by the PLO. It notes that the other simultaneous PLO victory should be taken into consideration. It is represented in Austria's recognition of the proclamation of the Palestinian state, the first such step taken within Western Europe, which is a logical prelude to other European recognitions of the Palestinian state after these countries welcomed the recent PNC Algiers resolutions.

The paper remarks that U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz, who barred 'Arafat from going to New York, has eloquently corrected that decision by declaring that the PLO has met the U.S. conditions to initiate a dialogue. The paper expresses its confidence that the Middle East peoples, who waited for this historic moment with hope and patience, will not let it disappear into thin air.

Sharaf Commentary

NC1512163688 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 1240 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Muhammad Sharaf commentary: "The U.S. Decision Will Make a Decisive Turn in the Course of the Middle East Issue"]

[Excerpt] The decision adopted by the United States at dawn today, namely, to initiate a continuous and in-depth dialogue with the PLO, is a most significant development which represents a decisive turning point in the course of the Middle East issue. This decision will steer peace efforts to the right course. This came in response to the peace message which Palestinian leader Yasir 'Arafat addressed to the United States and Israel, as well as to the entire world, in his speech before the UN General Assembly in Geneva on Tuesday.

It also came in response to Egypt's relentless efforts, represented by President Husni Mubarak's various contacts with the U.S. Administration, the last of which took place yesterday, during a telephone conversation between President Mubarak and U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz.

In that contact, President Mubarak urged the U.S. Administration to respond to Palestinians' moderate voice and the PLO's positive and constructive decisions to renounce all forms of terrorism, to recognize Israel's right to exist, and to accept UN Security Council Resolutions Nos 242 and 338. [passage omitted]

Palestinian leader Yasir 'Arafat's speech before the UN General Assembly was a message of peace in the truest sense of the word. It gave no room for other interpretations or beating about the bush. The subsequent U.S. decision confirms this and contributes to directing peace efforts toward the right course.

U.S. 'Objective, Brave' Stand

NC1512205388 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 1840 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Bahiy al-din Shu'ayb commentary carried within the "Newsreel" program]

[Text] For the first time since the outset of the Arab-Israeli dispute, the U.S. Administration has assumed an objective and brave stand which is free from the blind bias to Israel.

President Reagan's sudden decision to initiate a direct dialogue between the United States and the PLO represents a dramatic shift in U.S.-Palestinian relations. During the past few weeks, Yasir 'Arafat was denied an entry visa to the United States to deliver his speech before the UN General Assembly in New York.

Over the last few days, the United States continued to reject the PNC decisions. It also rejected Yasir 'Arafat's speech, under the pretext that the Palestinians had not made public their frank view on the terms set by the United States to hold a dialogue with the PLO. The United States was acting under the pretext of the commitment not to hold a dialogue with the PLO unless it recognized Israel, accepted UN Security Council Resolutions Nos 242 and 338, and renounced terrorism.

Hence, President Reagan's sudden decision to start a dialogue with the PLO did justice to the United States as a superpower of distinguished world status, who has friends in the Arab world and interests in the region. It also was a brave decision, because the U.S. Administration did not persist in its obstinate stand or resist the international current, which recognizes all the legitimate rights of the Palestinians and describes the Palestinian stand as a moderate and peaceful one which requires steps in this direction.

The new U.S. stand is the most significant political shift generated by the Palestinian peoples' uprising. This stand represents a major turning point in moving the wheel of peace to the end.

However, this does not mean that the road to peace is strewn with roses. The extent of U.S.-Israeli problems, which will evolve as a result of this decision, is bound to put the administration of President-elect George Bush in a very difficult position vis-a-vis the Zionist powers within the United States.

It behooves Bush and his administration, in order to successfully overcome these problems, to show the same bravery demonstrated by President Reagan in adopting such a decision.

For the millionth time we reiterate that the Arab world, with all its countries, is required to agree on a unified stand to cope with the new changes. Otherwise, if they let the present opportunity slip from their hands, they may find that they do not even have time to regret.

Opposition Parties Welcome U.S. Decision

NC1512171488 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1548 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] Cairo, 15 Dec (MENA)—In exclusive interviews with a MENA correspondent today, members of the Egyptian opposition parties welcomed the U.S. decision to begin a direct dialogue with the PLO.

Al-Ummah Party leader Ahmad al-Sabbahi welcomed the U.S. decision, saying it represents a positve step which we have been waiting for the United States to take in response to the careful Palestinian diplomatic efforts and the moderate stand taken by the PLO under Yasir 'Arafat's leadership.

He added that the U.S. decision came just in time, and said that it represents a wise U.S. policy toward the Palestinian issue. Al-Sabbahi expressed the hope that the U.S.-Palestinian dialogue will begin, continue, and succeed in establishing the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

For his part, Yasin Siraj al-Din, head of the Al-Wafd parliamentary group, described the U.S. decision as a major step on the road to holding an international peace conference. He said this U.S. step will play a positive role in the endeavors to establish a just and stable peace in the Middle East.

Siraj al-Din said the moderation, clarity, and bravery demonstrated by the PLO, in both the Algiers' resolutions and the PLO leader's speech in Geneva, played a major role in changing the bias of the United States toward Israel. The steadfast Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories also has played a role, he added.

Siraj al-Din expressed the hope that the U.S.-Palestinian dialogue will be pure and sincere, and be free of U.S.-Israeli maneuvers, so that world support will be concentrated for the Palestinian cause and the uprising. He also hopes this dialogue will lead to decisive and practical solutions with a view to establishing a just and lasting peace in the region.

Libya

Al-Qadhdhafi Praises Switch by UN to Geneva

LD1512180988 Tripoli Voice of Greater Arab Homeland in Arabic 1230 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] The brother leader of the revolution sent a cable to the kings and presidents of the world praising their states' positive stances of solidarity which led to the transfer of the UN General Assembly session to Geneva.

The brother leader of the revolution emphasized that the transfer of the UN General Assembly session to Geneva constituted a step toward the correct choice of moving the UN Headquarters to a neutral country where conditions and assurances of participation would enable the leaders and heads of the states of the world to freely express their views and defend the causes and interests of their peoples without being subject to the pressures of the United States.

The cable said: While thanking you for your country's stance of solidarity, I express to you my feeling that our unified position, as embodied in this initiative, constitutes a constructive step which should become a [one word indistinct] which will rid the United Nations from the hegemony of the United States.

Cables Arab Leaders on Veto

LD1512224688 Tripoli Television Service in Arabic 2000 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] The brother leader of the revolution has sent a cable to the Arab kings and presidents on the U.S. Administration's use of the right of veto against the UN Security Council resolution condemning the Zionist aggression against the Arab Lebanese territory.

In his cable the brother leader stressed that by this act the United States confirmed its position that is always biased to the enemy, a position hostile to the Arabs without discrimination. This act also showed that the United States pays no attention to the Arabs, and that it deals with them as a people without dignity.

The United States is fully persuaded that whatever stance it adopts or measure it takes against the Arabs, irrespective of the degree of the humiliation that it would cause them, and however it trifles with their causes and interests, they would stick to their relations with Israel and protect its interests in their respective countries.

The brother leader affirmed that the U.S. veto lacks political or moral justification.

In his cable to the Arab kings and presidents the brother leader asks: What if this aggression had taken place against part of the U.S. territory, or against one of its allies?

The brother leader also asked if the Arab kings and presidents would continue to stick to their relations with the United States, or if they will adopt a stance of pride.

'Sources' Claim Surt To Become New Capital

LD1612115488 Belgrade TANJUG in English 1636 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] Tripoli, December 15 (TANJUG)—Tripoli will be Libya's capital city no longer, it was learned here today.

Its political centre will become a small town of Surt on the coast of the Gulf of Sidra, knowledgeable sources claimed.

The reappearance of the idea about Surt as Libya's capital city came after Al-Qadhdhafi's failed initiative in the year before last to have the capital moved to the small town of Hun, on the brink of the oasis of Al-Jufrah, some 200 km southward in the desert hinterland of Surt.

Surt is Col. al-Qadhdhafi's native area and one of his residences is situated there.

Morocco

Leaders Atten' 15th French-African Summit

Delegations Arrive

LD1412160988 Rabat MAP in English 1220 GMT 14 Dec 88

[Excerpt] Casablanca, Dec 14. (MAP)—Fifteen heads of state have so far arrived in Casablanca to take part in the 15th French-African summit.

These are the heads of state of Guinea, Zaire, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Central African Republic, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Niger, Djibouti, Chad, Ivory Coast and the Comoros Islands.

Other heads of state, including President of France Francois Mitterand are expected in Morocco today to partake in this important French-African gathering.

The solemn opening ceremony of the summit will take place at the Royal Palace in Casablanca Thursday morning. A first plenary session will be held later in the afternoon and a second one on Friday morning before the official closing ceremony.

King Hassan II and President Mitterrand will hold afterwards a joint press conference. [passage omitted]

Mitterrand Speaks at Summit

LD1512175188 Rabat RTM Television Network in Arabic 1322 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Speech by French President Francois Mitterrand opening the Franco-African summit at Casablanca Royal Palace—live in French]

[Excerpts] [Passage omitted] As far as debts are concerned, as you know, in Toronto this year I proposed to the major industrialized countries which met there a significant alleviation of the repayment conditions for the poorest countries, the poorest countries. [passage omitted]

I will also remind you with what insistence France pressed its industrialized partners in Venice last year to observe the objective set by the international organizations of 0.7 percent of GNP as the minimum percentage of public aid from the advanced industrialized countries for development. Next year my country will devote 0.54 percent of its GNP to such aid. That is still not enough but it is by a long chalk in the first rank of the major industrialized countries, some of which are lagging behind with 0.25 percent.

France does not consider itself as having fulfilled its duties, particularly with regard to its friends, the African states. We French people have played an active role in support of the strengthening of the resources of the multilateral development aid organizations, of a better consideration of Africa's needs within these bodies.

France devotes more than two-thirds of its bilateral aid to this objective, 60 percent of this directly to the sub-Saharan region. If sometimes certain countries carry out spectacular measures, an examination of the figures demonstrates well what the real situation is. Although it is itself affected by the consequences of the world crisis, my country will continue to give you its complete and resolute support so far as it possibly can. [passage omitted]

Africa is threatened in many parts of its territory. [passage omitted] I want this problem to be studied in such a way as to decide what major works may be launched if the need is felt. For example, if the countries in question agree, an observatory for the Sahara should be set up, the conditions are right, to monitor climatic developments, to coordinate research, to work out development plans.

In the same way there has to be a considerable effort in the fight against locusts by regular coordination within the FAO and to provide countries which are afflicted with suitable aircraft within the framework of what are called the eco-forces [as heard]. [passage omitted]

As for the negotiations which are beginning, and which I have already mentioned to renew the Lome Convention linking the European countries, the twelve, with the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, it must be an

opportunity for further progress, I stress that. And if I mentioned just now the adaptation of STABEX and SYSMIN to the scope of the commodity prices crisis, it was not by chance.

The future convention will have to play a prominent role in promoting scientific research. I will add finally that other financial means will have to be included, in particular community facilities for structural adjustment, complementing multilateral or bilateral aid already in existence. [passage omitted]

There are reliable signs of a return to peace in southern Africa. At last Namibia is about to become independent. Well, I hope that nothing will hinder this, because there have been many hindrances to date, including the most unexpected ones. Angola and Namibia, as sovereign countries, will at last be able to direct the resources, which conflicts had diverted, to their people. Here again this is an African victory.

Here again I hail the role played by some of you. Was it not in Brazzaville that the agreements offering a peaceful future were negotiated, such a short time, a few hours, a few days ago? [passage omitted]

I have already had the opportunity of saying what I thought of the decisions made in Algiers—we are again in Africa—then in Geneva—we are getting a little bit further away from it—by the Palestinian leaders—we are on the doorstep of Asia. All this concerns us all because it is very important that the PLO should have proclaimed the creation of a Palestinian state, that it should have adhered to UN Resolutions Nos 181, 242, and 338, that it should have acepted the right for Israel to exist, and that it should have condemned terrorism.

Thus, in my view, it has obtained the representativeness that some denied it, which France recognizes that it has. It would thus appear that the conditions for the holding of an international conference, for which I have been hoping for several years, have been met. I take note, as a sign of real progress, of the very recent U.S. decision in view of the courageous decision—this must be stressed—by the PLO's main leader, Mr Yasir 'Arafat.

France is the friend of Arab peoples. It also has equally trusting and cordial relations with the State of Israel, and there is no contradiction in our approach. We are seeking an agreement, a balance, and the security of each and everyone within recognized, guaranteed borders so that peace may be the supreme guarantee for all.

France is not choosing a side. It is intent on preserving its capability to intervene here and there to give the views which in its capacity of permanent member of the Security Council it can rightfully translate into action. It will draw its own conclusions on the basis of terms to be set by itself. [passage omitted]

King Interviewed on Sahara Referendum

LD1412160888 Rabat MAP in English 1202 GMT 14 Dec 88

[Text] Rabat, Dec. 14 (MAP)—King Hassan II reaffirmed that he was looking forward to the organization of a self determination referendum in the Sahara and hoped that it would take place the soonest possible.

"I am personally convinced that it (the referendum) will be in favour of Morocco. And even if such was not the case, I nonetheless hope it will be held the soonest possible," the sovereign said in an interview with the French TV network "TF-1" on the occasion of the 15th French-African summit taking place in Casablanca, Morocco as of today.

To a question on Moroccan-Algerian relations, King Hassan II said, "We are acting in a schizophrenic play. We split into two. When it is question of the sahara issue, we are face-to-face and when it is question of bilateral problems we are side by side. It may be a good intellectual and diplomatic exercise, but what is sure is that it is not comfortable. So, we eagerly wish the holding of the referendum to clarify things".

About the October events in Algeria, King Hassan II said he had been solidly with President Chadli Bendjedid whom he described as "a good man...having no personal ambitions and desirous to live in peace with us".

"When the last word is left to the street...it is a very dangerous and contagious disease. And one has no interest to see its neighbour ill. One only hopes that he will receover", the sovereign said.

Commenting on his relations with the Libyan leader, Col. Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, King Hassan II disclosed that during their first meeting, they have both acknowledged that they had attempted to "destabilize" each other's regime and decided to change their respective stances and that Col. al-Qadhdhafi had always respected the commitments he made to the sovereign.

Asked whether he considered the recent statements made by PLO leader Yasir 'Arafat as an explicit recognition of Israel, King Hassan II said," as a politician, as a jurist, as a militant having struggled for the liberation of my own country...I think that what 'Arafat made is amply sufficient to recognize that Israel cannot possibly ask him for more. It is now up to Israel to do something".

Dealing with his meeting with the Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres (in Morocco in July 1986), King Hassan II said his interlocutor seemed to consider that war was not the solution nor was the current situation, but he did not seem in a hurry to definitely settle the issue.

As to the situation in the Israeli occupied territories where the Palestinian people's intifida (uprising) has entered its second year, the monarch pointed out that "experience has proved that whenever things move, one must be optimistic".

Dealing with "integrism" King Hassan II termed it "intolerance" and "political exploitation masked in religion" but said things will calm down, for, he explained, "integrism" is not conform to civilization. One must be a savage to accept integrism".

Filali, EEC's Cheysson Discuss Relations

LD0812172588 Rabat Domestic Service in Arabic 1600 GMT 8 Dec 88

[Excerpt] Within the framework of his official visit to our country, Claude Cheysson, EEC official in charge of Middle East policy and North-South relations, met with the parliamentary speaker Ahmed Osman at parliament building this morning. The two sides discussed several topics, particularly those related to the Moroccan parliamentary experiment and EEC affairs.

Cheysson was later received by Abdellatif Filali, minister of foreign affairs and cooperation, who held lengthy talks with him on Morocco's relations with the EEC in light of Morocco's recent request to join the Community. [passage omitted]

INA Director Renews Cooperation Agreement

JN0912165788 Baghdad INA in English 1430 GMT 9 Dec 88

[Text] Rabat, Dec. 9, INA—Mr. Sa'd al-Bazzaz, director general of the IRAQI NEWS AGENCY and Mr. Abdul-Jalil Finjerou, the director-general of the ARAB MAGHREB NEWS AGENCY discussed means of developing relations of news and technical cooperation between the two news agencies.

During the meeting they held here last night they agreed on renewing the agreement signed between the two agencies in addition to exchanging expertise and visits between staffs of the two agencies.

It is to be mentioned that the director general of the IRAQI NEWS AGENCY is visiting Morocco currently to participate in the ceremony of inaugurating the new headquarters of the Moroccan news agency and the international information symposium held on the sidelines of the ceremony where a number of directors general of Arab, European and African news agencies have taken part in addition to a number of Arab and foreign journalists.

Sudan

Al-Mahdi Receives Turkish Minister, Ozal Message

EA1512191588 Khartoum SUNA in Arabic 1455 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] Khartoum, 15 Dec (SUNA)—Prime Minister al-Sadiq al-Mahdi received here today the Turkish interior minister, who is currently on a visit to the country. [Sudanese] Interior Minister Dr 'Abbas Abu Shamah, who attended the meeting, said that the Turkish minister conveyed to Al-Mahdi a message from Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Ozal, connected with relations between the two countries.

Abu Shamah said that the Turkish minister was empowered by his government to discuss all areas of cooperation between Sudan and Turkey so that agreement could be reached on many issues, including the development of security relations between the two countries, the holding of academic-scientific symposiums by the two countries, and the exchange of parliamentary delegations.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Arrives in Khartoum

EA1512195588 Khartoum SUNA in Arabic 1700 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] Ethiopian Prime Minister Fikre Selassie Wogderes arrived in Khartoum today on a 4-day visit to Sudan. In a statement to SUNA on arrival, the prime minister said his visit aims to promote bilateral relations. He went on to say that the discussions which he and his accompanying delegation will have with the Sudanese side will concentrate on achieving peace and stability in the region.

Assembly Adjourns Discussion of Conference Date

EA1512190088 Omdurman National Unity Radio in Arabic 1300 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Excerpts] The Constituent Asembly has adjourned until Monday the motion introduced by the prime minister yesterday. In the proposed motion, the prime minister requested the Constituent Assembly's Consent to convene the national constitutional conference by 31 December and entrust the prime minister to take the necessary measures in this regard. [passage omitted]

Prime Minister al-Sadiq al-Mahdi described the ongoing war in the south as a defensive war from the government's point of view and denied allegations by some quarters that the government has used chemical substances in the war.

'Serious' Security Situation in Darfur

EA1512122288 Khartoum SUNA in English 0940 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] Khartoum, 15 December—The deputy commander in chief of the armed forces for operations, General (Engineer) 'Abd al-Rahmad Sa'id, has described

the security situation in Darfur as "very serious" and said clear cut instructions have been issued to the army to deal with any foreign troops in the region.

In a statement to the daily AL-SUDANI today Sa'id said foreign troops have infiltrated Sudan through the northwestern borders with Libya and that the army has clashed with them several times.

Meanwhile, deportation of the troops of Shaykh ibn 'Umar in western Sudan will start next Saturday according to an agreement reached between the Sudan and Chad this week.

Telecommunications Strike Ends 14 Dec

EA1512122788 Khartoum SUNA in English 0918 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] Khartoum, 15 December—A general strike involving 9,000 members of the Sudanese telecommunications corporation union was lifted yesterday after causing the complete stoppage of internal and international communication in the country. The strike was lifted following a meeting with the concerned authorities which consented to meet the demands of the union.

According to a union official, the state has lost one to three million dollars due to the strike. Some 65,000 telephone and 1,320 telex lines were put off due to the strike. The radio, Arabsat, telegraph and (?ATR) booking services have been affected by the strike.

Bahrain

Egypt's Al-Baz Arrives for 3-Day Visit 13 Dec

JN1312211588 Manama WAKH in Arabic 2030 GMT 13 Dec 88

[Text] Manama, 13 Dec (WAKH)—Dr Usamah al-Baz, director of the Egyptian president's office for political affairs and first under secretary of the Egyptian Foreign Ministry, arrived in Manama this evening on a 3-day visit to Bahrain.

Al-Baz was welcomed upon arrival by Shaykh Khalid ibn Hamad Al Khalifah, head of the heir apparent's office; Muhammad Ibrahim Mutawi', director general of the prime minister's office; and Nabil Mustafa Ibrahim, Egyptian ambassador to Bahrain.

Delivers Message to Amir

JN1412111888 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0945 GMT 14 Dec 88

[Text] Manama, 14 Dec (WAKH)—Bahraini Amir His Highness Shaykh 'Isa ibn Salman Al Khalifah has received a written message from Egyptian President Husni Mubarak. The message deals with Egypt's views on developments in the Arab region and means of bolstering solidarity among all Arab states.

The message—conveyed by Dr Usamah al-Baz, director of the Egyptian president's office for political affairs, to His Highness Shaykh 'Isa ibn Salman Al Khalifah today—also deals with recent developments in the Palestine question, particularly following the recent PNC resolutions in Algiers, the declaration of the independent state of Palestine, the current situation in Lebanon, and relations between Bahrain and Egypt.

Dr al-Baz, who also met with Bahraini Prime Minister Shaykh Khalifah ibn Salman Al Khalifah today, said that the Bahraini amir and prime minister expressed their full solidarity with the Palestine question and with the Lebanese people—their security and stability.

In a statement to WAKH, the Egyptian official added that he explained to Shaykh 'Isa ibn Salman Al Khalifah and Shaykh Khalifah ibn Salman Al Khalifah Egypt's stand on the recent Palestinian move following the Algiers declaration. He stressed Egypt's full support for this active Palestinian move and for efforts to end the Israeli occupation of the occupied Arab territories.

Dr al-Baz pointed out that his talks with their highnesses focused on the situation in the Arab Gulf region after the Iraq-Iran war. He expressed hope that stability and security will continue in the Gulf states to proceed with construction and development.

Al-Baz said that the Egyptian people are looking forward to his highness the Bahraini amir's visit to Egypt to express their feelings toward Bahrain—amir, people, and government.

Coast Guard Finds Sea Mine Near Lighthouse

JN1212123788 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1010 GMT 12 Dec 88

[Text] Manama, 12 Dec (WAKH)—A responsible source of the Bahraini Coast Guard administration said today that a Soviet-made medium-size sea mine was found floating in the sea near the Bahrain lighthouse yesterday. The source said that the mine was blown up the same evening.

Kuwait

Deputy Prime Minister Welcomes U.S.-PLO Talks

LD1512194788 Kuait KUNA in English 1809 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] Kuwait, Dec 15 (KUNA)—Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Shaykh al-Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir returned here Thursday, after taking part in the meetings of the U.N. General Assembly on Palestine in Geneva.

In a statement to KUNA, Shaykh al-Sabah said that Kuwait backs the new international trend, represented by the two resolutions approved by the Assembly with an overwhelming majority.

He noted that Kuwait views Washington's decision yesterday to open a dialogue with the PLO as a "positive step which should have taken place long ago," expressing hope that this step would serve the peace process.

Shaykh al-Sabah said that Kuwait's address before the session, which he delivered last Tuesday, supported the resolutions of the Palestine National Council and expressed Kuwait's continuous backing of this just cause.

Shaykh al-Sabah said that the level of attendance at the U.N. General Assembly session in Geneva reflects the great importance which the international community attaches to this just cause, particularly after the PNC session in Algiers. He said that the Assembly listened to a historic and effective speech by PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat, in which he spoke on behalf of the Palestinian people.

The deputy premier and foreign minister added that a new international trend toward establishing peace in the region is being noticed, indicating that the two decisions endorsed by the Assembly were one of the features of this trend.

On the other hand, he stressed that the U.S., which had accepted to open a dialogue with the PLO, should pressure Israel into [word indistinct] to the international will towards peace in the region.

Shaykh al-Sabah indicated that it is time that the Middle East enjoyed stability and that the Palestinian people restored their rights.

Shaykh al-Sabah had left the country Dec 10 to Bahrain to take part in the meetings of the GCC Ministerial Council then headed for Geneva last Tuesday.

Shaykh al-Sabah was accompanied on his trip home by Kuwait's permanent representative to the U.N. Muhammad Abu al-Hasan and director of the Office of the Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Yusuf al-Abdul 'Abd al-Razzaq.

Minister Views GCC, Arab Collaboration

PM1312124788 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 10 Dec 88 p 3

[Report on interview with Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Rashid al-Rashid by Hisham al-Diwan in Kuwait; date not given]

[Excerpts] In an interview with AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT Kuwaiti Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Rashid al-Rashid said that Kuwait supports the steps the PLO is taking to convince the world of the legitimacy of the Palestinian people's rights, including their right to establish their own state on their territory and in their homeland, with Jerusalem as its capital. This is in addition to the PLO's efforts to eliminate U.S. pretexts or doubts about the Palestinian people's desire for peace. [passage omitted]

In his interview with AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT the Kuwaiti minister expressed satisfaction with the security situation in both Kuwait and the region.

He said: Matters are proceeding satisfactorily and there is nothing to fear in our states, now that the fear of the hemorrhage in the region has been eliminated. [passage omitted]

Al-Rashid denied that the security agreement concluded by the GCC interior minister could have harmed the sovereignty of any member state or allowed interference in its internal affairs.

He praised the GCC states' relations with Iraq. He said that cooperation and coordination with Iraq has always been maintained under strong ties of brotherhood, common destiny, cooperation, and coordination to end the war, eliminate tension from the region, and prevent the flames from spreading to other states.

He said that Kuwait has suffered a great many calamities at home more painful than the missiles and artillery shells launched against its territory and tankers. But, despite all this, it has stuck to its desire for peace, arbitrating reason, and goodwill in light of its belief that dialogue is the best way to eliminate misunderstanding and confrontation and that nothing can prevent the replacement of the gun by reason.

Minister al-Rashid described the present stage in Gulf cooperation as a great start toward achieving all the objectives which the GCC could not achieve during its early days because of the conditions the region was experiencing during the Iraq-Iran war and because of subsequent obstacles to development plans in the region. [passage omitted]

Al-Rashid indicated that the 8-year integration march in the region now constitutes better ground for setting up and implementing pioneer economic, social, development, and political projects in order to make the GCC a regional union along the lines of the EEC, with which numerous forms of cooperation are being developed. [passage omitted]

Regarding the present Arab situation, Al-Rashid said that many things are still preventing the wheel of common Arab action from running to provide us with better conditions for integration and standardized legislation and laws.

He added: Although the obstacles are marginal, they have played a bad role in obstructing Arab accord. They are the cause of the problems which the Arab nation has faced.

They make it easy for its enemies and others to tamper with and sponge on it as well as disturb our Arab states and occupy vast and cherished territory in Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and other Arab states.

He concluded his interview by saying: We believe that with the end of the Gulf war and international chances for peace in the region, the time has come to overcome differences, eliminate their causes, and agree on new priorities for common Arab action.

KUNA Cites Papers on U.S.-PLO Dialogue

LD1612092788 Kuwait KUNA in English 0806 GMT 16 Dec 88

[TExt] Kuwait, Dec 16 (KUNA)—Two Kuwaiti newspapers Friday welcomed Washington's decision to initiate dialogue with the PLO and both stressed that the development must prompt Arabs to close their ranks for further political gains.

AL-WATAN daily said the U.S.-PLO dialogue should be viewed as the first step on a long and hard road for the Palestinian people to go. But it warned in its front-page

editorial that no one should be driven into the illusion that the road to a settlement of the Palestinian question or the proposed international conference on Mideast peace was now "all roses."

"Our people still have to face many obstacles, stumbling blocks and barbed wires," before reaching a satisfactory settlement, it said.

"Until then, we, Arabs and Palestinians, must preserve our national unity and strengthen the glorious intifada of our people inside (the occupied territories) without which it would have been impossible to imagine that such a development in the cause of our people could have happened," AL-WATAN concluded.

Meanwhile, AL-RA'Y AL-'AMM said in an editorial that Arab countries must exploit the American Administration's decision last Wednesday to initiate dialogue with the PLO to further isolate Israel in the world community and force it to come out of its stubborn policy on Middle East peace.

The paper hailed Palestinians for "having given almost all they have" to win the confidence of the world community and prove eligible as a full partner in serious negotiations on a Middle East settlement.

The paper, however, employed the significant development to renew calls for the return of Egypt to the Arab fold, saying such a move would be essential for Arabs to close their ranks and set the stage for a successful settlement of the Palestinian question.

"All that has been achieved in Geneva... was made possible because of the quiet Egyptian diplomacy and the pressures Cairo has made so that the historic opportunity created by the Palestinian leadership would be well invested and not squandered," AL-RA'Y AL-'AMM said.

Looking back at forty years of conflict with Israel, the paper said the outcome would largely depend on "our own ability to force change" and not only on the U.S. Administration's pressures on Israel.

Oman

Minister Welcomes U.S.-Palestinian Dialogue

JN1612104288 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0710 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] Muscat, 16 Dec (WAKH)—Omani Information Minister 'Abd al-'Aziz Muhammad al-Rawwas returned to Muscat from Geneva this morning after representing the Sultanate of Oman at the UN General Assembly meetings to discuss the Palestine question. He delivered his country's speech at the meetings.

In an arrival statement, Al-Rawwas praised the resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly on the Palestine question. He also welcomed the U.S.-Palestinian dialogue and wished it success.

PDRY

Energy Minister Returns from Sanaa Visit

EA1512101588 Aden Domestic Service in Arabic 1900 GMT 14 Dec 88

[Excerpt] Brother Salih Abu Bakr ibn Husaynun, member of the Central Committee, deputy prime minister and minister of energy and minerals, returned to Aden from Sanaa this morning after participating in the second session of the joint natural resources project between the two parts.

In a statement to ANA, Brother Husaynun explained that they examined the implementation of work carried out since the last session. He pointed out that the session drew up a timetable for the next stage.

The board of directors ratified a number of decisions and recommendations to activate the project and accelerate the implementation of the next stage. It also ratified the budget for next year, 1989.

He added that he handed a message from Brother Al-Bid, secretary general of the YSP Central Committee and Haydar Abu Bakr al-'Atas, member of the Political Bureau and chairman of the Supreme Peoples Council Presidium, to their brother, Colonel 'Ali Abdallah Salih, president of the Republic, commander in chief of the Armed Forces and secretary general of the General People's Congress, on ways to coordinate and follow up the implementation of the unity agreements between the two parts of the homeland. [passage omitted]

Qatar

Minister Addresses UN Geneva Meeting 14 Dec

JN1512111488 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0520 GMT 14 Dec 88

[Excerpts] Geneva, 14 Dec (WAKH)—The State of Qatar has affirmed that the rejection by Israel and those supporting it of the Palestinian peace initiative is a clear, open disavowal of both the United Nations and its resolutions.

It expressed hope that these parties will reconsider their stands in order to enhance the UN's status and achieve justice and peace throughout the world.

In a speech delivered before the UN General Assembly currently meeting in Geneva, Shaykh Ahmad ibn Sayf Al Thani, Qatari minister of state for foreign affairs, pointed out that many states have thus far recognized the Palestinian state—proclaimed at the PNC meeting in Algiers—and other states will recognize it in the future.

Undoubtedly, this irrevocably proves that the Palestinian people's right to self-determination on their national soil has become a simple truth of contemporary international life and a sweeping current, which it will be useless to try and stop, he added.

In his speech carried by QNA, Shaykh Ahmad ibn Sayf Al Thani said the Palestinian people's representatives have shown a desire for peace based on right and justice and voiced their readiness to attend an international conference under UN auspices with the participation of all parties concerned, including the PLO, the Palestinian people's sole legitimate representative, and the permanent Security Council member states.

He said: Transferring the meeting from New York to Geneva was inevitable following the regrettable conduct of the host country. This conduct took the form of trying to prevent the international community from listening to the Palestinian people's voice.

However, it pleases us that the international community, in splendid unanimity, has cared to grant the militant Palestinian people an opportunity to express their stand which calls for peace and stability in a sensitive region whose security is linked to the security and safety of the whole world.

He added: This conduct by the host country is a flagrant violation of its international commitments to the United Nations and also a blatant infringement of the bases of international law. We have hoped and continue to hope that the big powers will be the first to respect and abide by these bases.

We also hope this conduct is an exception which will not recur and will not become a principle or basis because this will pose a serious threat to the international edifice, to relations among states, and to international organizations. It will greatly damage the international community, he added.

The Qatari minister of state for foreign affairs pointed to the Palestinian uprising and the PNC resolutions adopted in its recent meeting in Algiers. He said both are important historic events which will have a positive effect on the Palestine question's march on the path of the aspired peaceful solution. [passage omitted]

He added that the clear statement made by PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat before the UN General Assembly confirmed the attitudes shown by the Algiers' historic resolutions concerning a just and comprehensive peace. This statement also removed the illegal doubts which some parties wanted to cast on these resolutions in order to fabricate obstacles to the path of peace.

The Qatari minister of state for foreign affairs said this clarity is represented by the proposal of the Palestinian peace initiative which was made by Yasir 'Arafat through his statement yesterday. The initiative calls for holding a meeting for the preparatory committee of the international conference for peace in the Middle East under the UN secretary general's patronage.

It also calls for placing the Palestinian Arab territories under temporary UN supervision and for protecting the Palestinian people by the UN peace-keeping forces until a comprehensive settlement is achieved in implementation of the relevant UN resolutions.

Concluding his speech, he said: The State of Qatar, which recognized the Palestinian state with holy Jerusalem as its capital, stresses its continued support for justice, right, and peace in the world. Qatar also emphasizes its support for the fraternal Palestinian people under the PLO, their sole legitimate representative.

Saudi Arabia

Government Welcomes U.S. Decision on PLO

LD1512171088 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 1640 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] Riyadh 15 Dec (SPA)—The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia welcomes the U.S. decision to start direct contacts with the PLO.

A responsible source stated to SPA today: The Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia welcomes the decision announced at dawn today by U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz that the United States is prepared to begin direct dialogue with the PLO, as the U.S. Government realizes the sincerity of the well-meaning intention expressed by Yasir 'Arafat in his speech before the UNGA in Geneva on Tuesday, in the context of efforts made to secure a lasting and overall peace in the region.

The source further said: The Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia hopes that all sides will continue sincere efforts to ensure the success of the negotiations in order to attain all expectations and aspirations.

Riyadh Radio Reports Reaction to U.S. Move

LD1512232888 Riyadh Domestic Service in Arabic 2000 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Husayn al-'Askari commentary]

[Text] U.S. President Reagan announced suddenly that his government will hold direct dialogue with the PLO in the wake of the speech by the PLO Executive Committee chairman at the UN General Assembly.

Reactions continue to emerge at Arab and international level concerning the initiatives put forward by the PLO leader 2 days ago before the UN General Assembly session in Geneva concerning the debate of the Palestinian issue.

These reactions are unanimous in saying that what the Palestinians had put forward helps international legality a great deal in its efforts to solve the problem of the Palestinian people, who gave the international community an opportunity that had been extended for well over 40 years—without them realizing their legitimate rights. The PLO leader has offered a strong push forward to strengthen efforts to convene an international peace conference.

The erroneous reading of the Palestinian options by those who still insist that what the PLO had offered does not fully meet what is required from the organization will form more barriers to any sincere effort to establish just and lasting peace.

As the Jordanian monarch said, the PLO leader responded to the demands which called upon him to agree to convene an international peace conference on the basis of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. In this context—although it was expected that the other sides' reaction to the intentions of the PLO would be more favorable—what actually happened was the opposite.

The Zionist enemy still rejects every peaceful initiative that does not measure up to Israel's criteria. Also, a U.S. spokesman described the acceptance by Yasir 'Arafat of the two Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, and his denunciation of terrorism, as vague. This gave the strong impression that a misunderstanding of the intentions put forward by the PLO most regrettably still remains.

This makes the attitudes more complex, and reflects the feeling that asking the PLO to give everything in return for nothing reveals quite frankly the extent to which the other sides will go in order to carry out blackmail, which is not to be (?missed by the Palestinian people) or their representative.

This blackmail comes through asking the PLO leader to reveal all his cards and then to be told quite frankly: You are now standing at the starting point and you must begin the journey afresh as if nothing has happened.

All this is being considered by the Palestinian people, despite the U.S. President's announcement that the United States will begin a direct dialogue with the PLO.

This was a sudden U.S. step, announced by the U.S. secretary of state last night when he said that the U.S. ambassador to Tunisia was authorized to make contacts with the PLO. The U.S. secretary of state also repeated his government's nonrecognition of the Palestinian state.

In the midst of these developments, it would appear premature to talk about the expected results in view of the lack of a clear view of the sudden changes.

Yemen Arab Republic

PDRY Energy Minister Conveys Message to Salih

JN1312134888 Sanaa Domestic Service in Arabic 1200 GMT 13 Dec 88

[Text] Brother Colonel 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, president of the Republic, commander in chief of the Armed Forces, and secretary general of the General People's Congress, received in his office today brother Salih Abu Bakr ibn Husaynun, member of the YSP Central Committee, deputy prime minister, and minister of energy and minerals in the southern part of the homeland, who conveyed to the president leader a message from his brother 'Ali Salim al-Bid, secretary general of the YSP Central Committee; and Abu Bakr al-'Attas, member of the Political Bureau and chairman of the Supreme People's Council Presidium, dealing with consultation and coordination of issues of interest to the two parts of the homeland.

The president leader stressed the importance of implementing the unionist steps approved by the leaders of the two parts of the homeland. The meeting was attended by brothers Yahya Husayn al-'Arashi, minister of state for unity affairs and member of the Standing Committee; and Ahmad 'Ali al-Muhani, minister of petroleum and mineral wealth.

Makes Statement, Departs

JN1412135488 Sanaa Domestic Service in Arabic 1200 GMT 14 Dec 88

[Text] Brother Salih Abu Bakr ibn Husaynun, member of the [YSP] Central Committee, deputy prime minister, and minister of energy and minerals in the southern part of the homeland, and his accompanying delegation left Sanaa this morning after he conveyed a message to brother Colonel President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih from his brothers 'Ali Salim al-Bid, secretary general of the YSP Central Committee; and Haydar Abu Bakr al-'Attas, YSP Political Bureau member and chairman of the the Supreme People's Council Presidium in the southern part of the homeland. The message dealt with coordination and consultations on issues of unity between the two parts.

Ibn Husaynun also led the delegation from the southern part to the meetings of the board of directors of the Joint Yemeni Project for Natural Resources, which he said were successful. Minutes of the resolutions and recommendations connected to the project for the next stage were signed. They include a timetable to follow up and implement this vital project.

In his statement to SABA', brother Ibn Husaynun said that he is confident that the next stage will witness intensive activity in the project's works. He also

expressed his satisfaction, and that of his accompanying delegation, for the efforts made by the brother officials in the northern part to provide all resources to assure the success of this meeting.

Brother Ibn Husaynun was seen off by brother Muhammad 'Ali al-Muhani, minister of oil and mineral resources; brother 'Ali al-Jabr 'Alawi, under secretary of the ministry for the mineral resources sector; brother Muhammad al-'Ammari, director of Unity Affairs Bureau; and a number of members of the board of directors of the Joint Yemeni Project for Natural Resources.

Al-'Attar-led Delegation Leaves for Netherlands

JN1312143488 Sanaa Domestic Service in Arabic 1200 GMT 13 Dec 88

[Text] Muhammad Sa'id al-'Attar, deputy prime minister, minister of development, head of the Central Organization for Planning, and member of the Standing Committee, left for the Netherlands at the head of a delegation to attend the opening of an exhibition on Yemeni civilization at the Royal Museum of Equatorial Sciences and Research in Amsterdam. The exhibition will last 6 years.

In a statement to SABA', Al-'Attar said that the exhibition, titled "3000 Years of Civilization and Art," will reflect Yemen's historical, cultural, and technical heritage and the contributions of Yemeni civilization.

Al-'Attar added that during his stay, he will lead our country's delegation to the Yemeni-Netherlands annual negotiations for 1988, which will center on spheres of bilateral cooperation and the assessment of projects the Netherlands Government is implementing.

These development projects number approximately 35. The delegation also comprises Isma'il al-Asla', head of the General Organization of Antiquities and Libraries; [name indistinct], Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries under secretary; [name indistinct], Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Wealth under secretary; Husayn Muhammad 'Abdallah, deputy chairman of the board of directors of the General Organization for Tourism; and [name indistinct], head of the Yemeni Company for Tourism.

'Aziz Meets With Red Cross Official in Geneva
JN1512211088 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1947 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] Geneva, 15 Dec (INA)—Tariq 'Aziz, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, met with Cornelio Sommaruga, president of the International Committee of the Red Cross [ICRC], in Geneva today.

The minister spoke about the Iranian regime's trickery and maneuvers to evade its commitments to the Third Geneva Convention. He said that the most recent of these maneuvers was its violation of the agreement reached last month under the auspices of the ICRC to exchange a number of the sick and wounded POW's.

He urged the ICRC to assume its responsibilities to force the Iranian regime to abide by the Geneva convention on POW's and to end their sufferings.

The head of the legal department at the Foreign Ministry attended the meeting.

Ramadan Receives Message From Romanian Premier
JN1212151488 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1335 GMT 12 Dec 88

[Text] Baghdad, 12 Dec (INA)—Taha Yasin Ramadan, RCC member and first deputy prime minister, today received a written message from Constantin Dascalescu, Romanian prime minister, dealing with economic cooperation between Iraq and Romania and ways to promote it.

Romanian Ambassador in Baghdad Ionel Cetateanu handed the message to Ramadan when the latter received him today.

Ramadan Hands SFRY Envoy Message for Mikulic
JN1512120488 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0950 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Excerpt] Baghdad, 15 Dec (INA)—Taha Yasin Ramadan, RCC member and first deputy prime minister, today received Stojan Andov, SFRY ambassador in Baghdad. The first deputy prime minister handed the SFRY ambassador a written message to Branko Mikulic, president of the SFRY Federal Executive Council dealing with bilateral relations and cooperation between the two friendly countries and ways to promote it. [passage omitted]

National Assembly Elections To Be Held 1 Mar
JN1212133888 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1130 GMT 12 Dec 88

[Text] Baghdad, 12 Dec (INA)—It was officially announced here today that the nomination period for the Iraqi National Assembly elections has been defined for 15 days as of 2 January. This came in a decision by the RCC published today.

The decision says that the National Assembly elections will be held on Wednesday, 1 March, as decided before. Consequently, the nomination period for the assembly elections will be extended for 15 days.

These elections are the third since 1980. Since June 1980, the elections were conducted two times and resulted in the formation of the Iraqi National Assembly that included 250 members representing the people for 4 years in 2 consecutive sessions. Any 25-year-old Iraqi can nominate himself for the assembly elections.

In its previous session, the National Assembly discussed a number of issues and issued important legislations and laws. The RCC gave the National Assembly large-scale powers including the questioning of ministers on their works and their departments' accomplishments.

Trade Minister on Postwar Economy, Private Sector
JN1312113288 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 13 Dec 88 p 6

[By Muhammad Amin]

[Excerpts] Iraqi Trade Minister Dr Muahmmad Mahdi Salih has affirmed that the brotherly relations between Iraq and Jordan are distinguished on various levels. He referred to Jordan's honorable stand alongside Iraq during the war.

In an interview with AL-DUSTUR in Amman, Dr Salih said that Iraq emerged from the war strong and sound as it emerged militarily victorious. He indicated that there is a new orientation in the Iraqi economy. This began 2 years before the end of the war and will continue to be adopted.

He explained that this orientation is based on an administrative and economic revolution in Iraq. He said this revolution is headed by giving the private sector wide attention to enable it to play its required role in the best way possible.

Dr Salih affirmed that the battle of reconstruction in Iraq did not cease during the war. He explained that the largest strategic projects were accomplished or tendered during the war. He explained that the increase of Iraqi oil revenues will enable Iraq to continue and promote development programs as well as economic and social activities. [passage omitted]

On the postwar orientations of the Iraqi economy and the economic situation in Iraq, Iraqi Trade Minister Dr Muhammad Mahdi Salih said that His Excellency Iraqi President Saddam Husayn had indicated that the postwar economic measures were prepared 2 years before the cease-fire which went into effect on 20 August 1988.

He noted that Iraq is prepared for the peace era, especially regarding the state measures concerning the private sector's relationship with the overall economic activity, the volume of the public sector's participation in economic and social development, and international economic relations and expediting the payment of debts. He explained that there are plans for these matters.

Dr Salih affirmed that the private sector in Iraq has been given great attention over the past 2 years, and that there is an administrative and economic revolution in Iraq led by the president of the Republic. He indicated that this revolution began at the beginning of 1987. He said this revolution has given the private sector an important role in the practical field. He said that although the private sector had a role in the theoretical and practical fields, this sector has now been given a greater role.

For example, agriculture has become fully run by the private sector. He said that all state projects belonging to the abolished Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform have been sold to the private sector, and the ministry merged with the Ministry of Irrigation.

He said there is also an orientation in the agricultural sector toward selling a number of state projects to the private sector. In the trade sector, domestic trade is entirely run by the private sector, with the exception of the state-run central markets.

Regarding foreign trade, the private sector last year was given a 20 percent increase in the volume of imports through banks in comparison with the previous year. He said that a decision was also issued permitting imports without credit transfers to give the private sector further flexibility.

Dr Salih affirmed that giving a greater role to the private sector and putting this orientation into practice has had positive and important results in the field of increasing productivity. He indicated that one of the important developments is the great increase in the productivity of the public sector as a result of the administrative-economic changes and reduction of state structures. This gave high flexibility to economic action and saved huge sums of money.

He said that 500 million Iraqi dinars were cut from the 1988 budget in comparison with 1987 through the administrative measures which affected various state departments. [passage omitted]

On the issue of allowing the establishment of trade banks in Iraq, Dr Salih said that the private sector can start business in any field. He said that studies are underway regarding the banking field.

He indicated that the public tourism establishment will sell some of its projects to the private sector, while the rest will be leased through long-term contracts. He said that in the production sector, mills, for example, have been sold to the private sector. He noted that this also applies to the services sector. He explained that the state supports the private sector so that it can move to more important and comprehensive issues in the peace era. [passage omitted]

Dr Salih indicated that after the recent OPEC agreement, oil prices will increase. He said that the increase in revenues will activate the economy of oil-producing countries, including Iraq, which will be able to continue and promote its development programs and economic and social activities through a comprehensive view of the economy and with the pan-Arab dimension taken into consideration. [passage omitted]

Amman Radio on Joint Technical Committee Meeting

JN1412182288 Amman Domestic Service in Arabic 1600 GMT 14 Dec 88

[Text] Baghdad—Meetings of the ninth session of the technical Jordanian-Iraqi committee emanating from the joint committee for economic, trade, and technical cooperation began in Baghdad today.

The Jordanian side of the committee is headed by Muhammad al-Saqqaf, secretary general of the Ministry of Industry and Trade; the Iraqi side is headed by Fa'iq 'Ali 'Abd al-Rasul, head of the Iraqi Fund for Foreign Development.

The conferees will discuss bilateral cooperation issues in the industrial, trade, agricultural, health, finance, transport, and specifications fields. The technical committee will prepare for the meetings of the joint committee scheduled to be held in Baghdad next week.

Paper Cited on Iranian 'Aggression' on Tanker

JN1412114188 Baghdad INA in English 1035 GMT 14 Dec 88

Baghdad, Dec. 14, INA—The Iranian aggression on a foreign tanker in the Arab Gulf was the first of its kind since last August and it carries new evidence of the Iranian aggressive tendency, the Iraqi daily AL-QADISIYAH said.

In a commentary here today the newspaper said that Iran considers the ceasefire in the Iraq-Iran war as a temporary truce from which it benefits to rebuild its destroyed military force.

AL-QADISIYAH daily added that Iran did not abide by a comprehensive settlement in the direct negotiations in Geneva with Iraq and it did not sign a final peace treaty to end the conflict between the two sides and it used tricks, cheating and manoeuvres vis-a-vis comprehensive peace.

AL-QADISIYAH newspaper added that these Iranian methods make peace items fragile and inapplicable and more exposed to aggression. The daily added that through its aggression on the foreign tanker, Iran proves it is walking on the way that does not serve peace, security, and stability.

AL-QADISIYAH newspaper stressed that Iraq is abiding by peace and its faith in peace in the region is real and firm.

The Iranian gunboats stopped last Monday the British tanker "Trident" in the Strait of Hormuz and inspected it for 45 minutes before allowing it to continue.

Shamir Calls U.S. Decision 'Grave Mistake'
TA1512194188 Jerusalem Television Service in Hebrew 1900 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Excerpts] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir believes that the United States made a grave mistake in its decision to negotiate with the PLO. The Prime Minister's Office said tonight that Mr Shamir does not want to exacerbate relations with the United States, and wants to repair them to the extent possible.

Our political correspondent adds that according to the prime minister, the new situation that has been created makes a broad-based government even more necessary. [passage omitted]

The prime minister adamantly refused to be interviewed today. He rejected requests for interviews by news media from around the world. In a conversation with Shamir's aides it was learned that the prime minister is in a gloomy mood because he is convinced that the United States made a grave mistake.

The conversation with U.S. Ambassador Thomas Pickering, who brought the official U.S. announcement this morning, was unpleasant. The prime minister told the U.S. ambassador that the U.S. move does not contribute to Middle East peace, and will encourage terrorism. During the day the prime minister held consultations with his aides and several Likud ministers, including Minister Moshe Arens. [passage omitted]

Peres: U.S. Relations To Stay 'Close and Friendly'
TA1512184788 Jerusalem Television Service in Arabic 1730 GMT 15 Dec 88

[News conference in Hebrew and English by Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres at the Jerusalem Hilton Hotel on 15 December—videorecorded with Arabic subtitles]

[Text] [Peres—in English] Peace remains the central hope for our country. I don't consider there is any other issue which is overshadowing the importance and the centrality of bringing peace to our region.

Secondly, we do believe that the conflict between the Arabs and the Israelis, the solution of the Palestinian problem, can be done only diplomatically, politically, and peacefully. We do not see any military engagement in order to overcome those problems.

Three, in order to achieve it we have to talk with the Jordanians and the Palestinians. We are ready to talk with the Jordanians and the Palestinians jointly, and we are ready to talk with the Jordanians and the Palestinians separately, individually. We don't make any conditions.

We prefer a face-to-face, direct talk, and the sooner the better. And, then again, we'll judge the PLO upon its record, not just upon its declarations because, maybe, one of the differences between us and some other countries is that while other countries are expressing their views out of sincere hope, we express our views out of very bitter experience.

We were the ones who faced terror and violence and disappointments time and again, and there is no better judge or measurement than the record of real behavior. I appreciate.... [Peres' remarks superimposed by announcer's remarks in Arabic]

[Peres—in Hebrew] We say we are prepared to talk with any peace-seeking Palestinian who recognizes the State of Israel and denounces violence. This is a fundamental, clear-cut, and unequivocal position. We say that initially we are prepared to discuss an interim agreement with the Palestinians. We say that the solution can only be a political one, not a military one—these are the Labor Party's positions, and they remain unchanged.

[Shlomo Ganor—in Hebrew] Mr Peres, in your meeting with the U.S. ambassador this afternoon, did you get a U.S. promise, or did you hear some soothing words, to the effect that negotiations between the PLO and the United States would not harm Israel?

[Peres—in Hebrew] It was me who made the soothing remarks, saying that in my opinion relations between the United States and Israel would remain as close and friendly as they were in the past. On several occasions in the past we experienced mutual disagreements, but these never harmed the close relations and friendship.

I also heard from the ambassador what I had earlier read in the secretary of state's message; that is, more accurate interpretations of the U.S. position, which is that it is looking for peace and not for a dialogue; that a dialogue does not mean recognition of a Palestinian state or of the PLO; that under no circumstances whatsoever is the United States prepared at the moment to recognize a Palestinian state; and that it believes that any solution must be bilateral and the result of agreement between the sides, and cannot be a unilateral act.

Shamir To Seek To 'Correct' U.S. 'Mistake'
TA1612080688 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0600 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Telephone interview with Avi Pazner, the prime minister's media adviser, by Mikha Friedman and Goni Savir—live]

[Text] [Friedman] More than 1 day has passed since the U.S. announcement on the dialogue with the PLO; this afternoon the first meeting is to be held between the sides. Why is the Israeli prime minister not reacting?

[Pazner] You are not being accurate. Yesterday morning, the prime minister was the first to issue a reaction to the U.S. decision on a dialogue with 'Arafat. I think that the statement was broadcast on the Voice of Israel and on IDF Radio at 0700.

[Friedman] Why does not Yitzhaq Shamir himself answer questions? After all, the issue is too complicated to be dealt with by a brief statement, which I believe you released to the media.

[Pazner] I think the prime minister was correct in not rushing to launch a public debate over the decision before all its angles and all its implications have been examined. I think that something has happened in the United States, and this requires of us to do some thinking and preparations in anticipation of the expected developments.

It is more important to think and to take action than to react publicly. The prime minister will react publicly soon, perhaps as early as today or during next Sunday's Cabinet session. I think, however, that in this situation we must not react hastily. It is more important to think and plan how to get out of this situation than to start granting interviews.

[Savir] We have heard that the prime minister has taken the U.S. move to heart, that he is sad, worried, and disappointed, and that he had a difficult meeting with Pickering yesterday.

[Pazner] Look, the message from Washington has not been heartwarming, although the development was not a complete surprise. For several weeks already we have had information concerning such intentions. When such a development takes place, however, there is undoubtedly an element of disappointment, though not of sadness, because in such a situation we look ahead and immediately consider the appropriate response to such a move.

There is disappointment, and Shamir expressed it during his meeting with Ambassador Pickering and asked him to convey it to the United States. There is no room, however, for crying over what has already taken place; what we must now do is to prepare for the future and to see to it that the U.S. decision will not harm us.

[Friedman] It is common knowledge that there are good relations between our prime minister and the U.S. secretary of state. Even during periods of serious differences of opinion the two emphasized their good relations. Is the prime minister personally disappointed with the behavior of his friend Shultz, not only because of the fact of the decision but also because of the way it was made? Israel was not briefed about the erosion in the U.S. position.

[Pazner] You were correct when you defined George Shultz as one of Israel's greatest friends in the United States. The prime minister continues to regard him as such, and their friendship has not been harmed. Shamir continues to appreciate what Shultz has done for Israel in the past; had he remained secretary of state he would surely have continued to help Israel.

At the same time, however, there are presently differences of opinion between them—not between them personally, but between Israel and the United States—concerning the U.S. move. The prime minister received a letter from Shultz yesterday which explained the United States' motives. Shamir, on his part, explained to Pickering his feelings concerning this move and asked him to convey them to Shultz.

I believe that a frank dialogue between friends can only help and in no way harms the personal friendship between Shultz and Shamir. What is more significant, however, than the personal friendship between the two—which is important in itself—are the relations between Israel and the United States, which have also not been harmed by this dialogue, and we will do everything possible to keep these relations good.

[Savir] Does this hold for the new U.S. Administration too?

[Pazner] Certainly. We must look ahead. The Reagan-Shultz era will end on 20 January, and we will enter a new period with Bush and Baker. We have been acquainted with them for many years, and both of them have shown great friendship for Israel and have firmly supported it.

It is essential to continue the dialogue with them. We are not going to play the offended; we will search for every possible way to explain to the Americans their mistake in this move and, as far as possible, correct it.

Arens: Peace With Jordan 'Only a Question of Time'

TA1512190188 Jerusalem Television Service in Arabic 1700 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Interview in Hebrew with Arabic subtitles with Minister Moshe Arens by Shlomo Ganor and Salman Tawil on 15 December; in the studio—videorecorded]

[Excerpts] [Passage omitted] [Ganor] Is there not a danger that a negative Israeli response to 'Arafat's proposals will strengthen the rightwing of the PLO?

[Arens] I think that any contacts with the PLO, any recognition of the PLO, will necessarily strengthen the extremists in the Arab world and among the Palestinian population. I think that the extremists in the PLO are not considered in Israeli eyes much more extremist than Yasir 'Arafat himself.

We all condemn the cruel actions they have been carrying out. These actions have been the most devastating actions anywhere since World War II. We must find

partners for negotiations who do not believe in violence—who do not use violence—who want negotiations, in order to reach a peace accord.

[Ganor] Will you find such people?

[Arens] I think there are such people. [passage omitted]

[Ganor] The current belief is that the Jordanian option and autonomy are dead. Do you agree with that?

[Arens] I do not agree with that evaluation. You are referring to two things. Jordan is Israel's neighbor. It has a long border with Israel. In the long run—it is only a question of time—we will sign a peace agreement with Jordan just as we did with Egypt. We must speak to the Palestinian population in Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip. I find it hard to imagine an ideal peace accord without negotiations with the Palestinians, without an agreement with them. [passage omitted]

[Ganor] It is no secret that a new situation has been created. The question is whether there will be in Israel a revision of policies, positions, and presentation of the issue of advancing the peace process.

[Arens] Although we are today, justifiably, dealing intensely with the U.S. move, I would not exaggerate its importance. The most important thing is what is happening in the field, and our desire to achieve peace after many years of war. We must continue this effort. There is certainly room for initiatives—also by us—in order to reach negotiations which will begin to close the very deep gaps between Israel and the Arab world, between Israel and the Palestinian population in Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip. [passage omitted]

[Salman] Can you tell us what has already been achieved in the Likud-Alignment coalition talks?

[Arens] I think it has already been reported that there is a great deal of understanding on the guidelines, which are based on the those of the outgoing government. These, by the way, include a clause which rejects any negotiations with the PLO. [passage omitted]

Ben-Aharon Asks U.S. To 'End This Ruse'

TA1512175788 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Telephone interview with Yosi Ben-Aharon, director general of the Prime Minister's Office by Yitzhaq Ro'e and Goni Savir—live]

[Text] [Ro'e] I hear a thundering silence from the prime minister himself, if not from his office. After 'Arafat's appearance in Geneva there was an immediate response. Does this mean that we are being more careful this time?

[Ben-Aharon] First, we are all studying everything that has been said. That is the task of all those dealing with foreign policy in the Prime Minister's Office. Second, there is no silence. Just by chance I saw that the Cabinet secretary appeared on the 'Erev Hadash television program on this issue. I myself addressed the foreign press this morning. The prime minister said what he had to say, and that is the Israeli position.

There is no need for overexposure just because the United States slipped up. In my view, it simply slipped and fell into a trap because of an oversimplified explanation of 'Arafat's remarks which supposedly meet the three conditions presented by the United States in 1975 for a dialogue with the PLO.

[Savir] You said the United States slipped up. How does this information influence immediate U.S.-Israeli relations, or how will it influence future relations?

[Ben-Aharon] There are hopes and fears. I hope that the minute the dialogue between the United States and PLO leaders begins in Tunisia—and the United States presents its declared position that it opposes a Palestinian state west of the Jordan River—the participants to the dialogue will reconsider the point of such contacts since even a minimal basis for such a dialogue does not exist.

There are two main pillars to PLO policy: First, opposition to the existence of the State of Israel; and second, advocation of a Palestinian state. The first—negative—point, has supposedly been overruled. 'Arafat declared that he is stopping all the negative things. We will wait and see if that is true.

On the second pillar of PLO policy, there is no mutual basis between the PLO and the United States. Therefore, what is the point of such a move which merely gave legitimacy to a terrorist organization to harm the chances to continue the peace process?

[Ro'e] Yosi Ben-Aharon, you say that Washington slipped up. Did we not make a mistake when we passed the ball—the initiative—to Washington? Now everybody knows that in order to talk to Jerusalem, they have to go through Washington.

[Ben-Aharon] That has been known for a very long time. That is, those who want to pressure Jerusalem, to extract things from Jerusalem, knew as far back as 1967 that the path to Jerusalem goes through Washington. I recall that in 1968-69 there was the Rogers plan, and later there was the Jarring mission, and after that....

[Ro'e, interrupting] My question is whether we did not make a mistake by helping in this direction? Surely, you are not praising the earlier efforts?

[Ben-Aharon] No, I am referring to reality. The reality is that we are totally isolated from one superpower—the USSR, and all those who follow it—and we are close to

and identify with the other superpower. Due to this connection—and there is an element of dependency here—everybody knows that in order to pressure Jerusalem they have to operate through Washington.

[Savir] Perhaps, in the final analysis, Israel's paralyzed foreign policy—the decision to sit tight and do nothing—led us to a situation whereby the United States is opening a dialogue with the PLO?

[Ben-Aharon] The characterization of our policy as one of paralysis, and sitting tight and doing nothing, is very subjective and made by people who simply do not know the truth. The truth is that we dispatched messages and made efforts to get talks going with our neighbors in many different ways. There are those, however, who reached the conclusion that the best way to extort things from Israel, to bring it to its knees and force it into a corner, is by supporting the PLO and going through the United States.

To my regret, the United States supported this position, up to a certain point. We will now have to tell the Americans—and this is already being done since we are in permanent contact with them—that we regret the move. We will not negotiate with the PLO because that would mean we undermine our very existence. We will tell them that we fear that what they did will place obstacles in the path of peace negotiations.

We ask them to end this ruse as soon as possible so that together we can make use of the immense power and influence of United States in the Middle East to bring about something similar to what we did in Camp David 10 years ago. That is, real negotiations with those with whom we have to live, and not with groups of terrorist organizations.

[Ro'e] You are saying that this ruse should vanish.

[Ben-Aharon] Thank you.

Bethlehem Mayor Welcomes U.S. Decision on PLO

JN1512180388 Jerusalem in Arabic to the Arab World 1530 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Interview with Bethlehem Mayor Ilyas Frayj by Ibrahim Shahid on 15 December carried within the "With the Events" program; place not given—recorded]

[Text] [Shahid] Bethlehem Mayor Ilyas Frayj, good evening.

[Frayj] Good evening.

[Shahid] Naturally, you have heard about the U.S. decision on its readiness to hold negotiations with the PLO following the statements and press conference of Yasir 'Arafat. What is your response?

[Frayj] We greatly welcome the U.S. decision. This is a historic decision. The United States has now agreed to negotiate with the PLO in its capacity as the Palestinian people's representative. This decision will have a positive effect on different countries in the world.

In my opinion, all countries of the world will now recognize the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and will deal and negotiate with the PLO's representative on this basis. The alternatives, which were mentioned here and there in the past, have gone forever. This decision has political implications, especially since the United States is a superpower, which has influence on the whole world. We hope the Israeli Government will reassess its policy.

If it wants peace, it must now participate in an international conference attended by all sides, including the PLO. But, if Israel thinks that it can impose peace and retain the land, then there will be conflict in this region.

[Shahid] In your opinion, what prompted the United States to issue these resolutions, while in the recent past it did not allow 'Arafat to enter the United States and deliver his speech?

[Frayj] The answer is clear. Yasir 'Arafat's speech in the United Nations in Geneva—and also his press conference, which he held yesterday in Geneva—was clear and frank. It called for just and permanent peace, together with peace and security for all peoples in this region—Jews and Arabs.

[Shahid] In your opinion, what are the future steps that you feel can begin in this respect?

[Frayj] Now all countries in the world support the Palestinian peace initiative for negotiations with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council to achieve a just and permanent solution.

Resolution 242 means peace in exchange for territory. The PLO has recognized that the 1967 borders will be the borders between the Palestinian state and the Jewish state. This is a 10-mile step forward by the PLO and the Palestinian people, while the Israeli leaders are announcing that they will not abandon 1 inch of the occupied territories.

[Shahid] Thank you, Bethlehem Mayor Ilyas Frayj.

[Frayj] You are welcome.

Gaza Islamic Leader: 'Nothing New' in U.S. Move

TA1612123588 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 16 Dec 88 p 2

[Report by Joel Greenberg and Joshua Brilliant]

[Excerpts] Palestinians in the territories yesterday welcomed the American decision to start a dialogue with the PLO, hailing it as a major achievement of the uprising, and expressing hope that it would lead to talks with Israel. [passage omitted]

In the Gaza Strip, Islamic fundamentalist leaders expressed reservations about the PLO's political moves. Shaykh Ahmad Yasin, noted that the new dialogue "doesn't mean an end to the conflict. It is just a beginning of a long and hard way."

Clearly skeptical of the U.S. administration's move, he said: "To all appearances, there is a change in American policy, but deep inside, there is nothing new. America is Israel, and Israel is America". [passage omitted]

[Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew on 16 December in a report by Galilee correspondent 'Atallah Mansur on page three adds that as opposed to Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement in the territories, "the Israeli Islamic Movement supports the PNC resolutions and the declaration of a Palestinian state and is in favor of PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat's peace offensive. A statement to this effect was published yesterday by the movement's spokesman and leader, Shaykh 'Abdallah Nimr Darwish of Kafr Qasim. Darwish condemned the criticism of the peace initiative, saying that the PLO leader requires broad support for his initiative and that those questioning his activity harm the interests of the Palestinian people."]

Egypt's Basyuni Comments on U.S. Initiative

TA1612082288 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0600 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Telephone interview in English with Muhammad Basyuni, Egyptian ambassador to Israel, by Goni Savir—live]

[Text] [Savir] Good morning to you, Mr Basyuni.

[Basyuni] Good morning to you.

[Savir] What role did Egypt take in the last developments toward opening a dialogue between the United States and the PLO?

[Basyuni] First of all, we do believe that now can we solve a Palestinian problem without talking with the only representative of the Palestinian people? This is why Egypt is always playing a powerful and constructive role in tackling the Palestinian problem.

[Savir translates the above and continues] Once the dialogue begins, will Egypt continue to be involved and in what way?

[Basyuni] You know that when we signed the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, we did not aim at a separate or partial peace. As you know, our aim was to achieve the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict in all its aspects, so we will continue our effort so we can play from this point a good role for tackling this problem.

[Savir translates the above and continues] Does Egypt, Mr Basyuni, really believe that the last statements of the PLO indicate a substantial change in the organization?

[Basyuni] I am optimistic. Let us try first, then we can give our judgement, but don't say no from the beginning, because we do believe that it is a golden chance, and I am afraid if we will miss it the new generation will not forgive us. A comprehensive peace based on the legitimate rights of the Palestinians, as well as on the legitimate aspirations of Israeli men, women, and children to live in peace and security. [sentence as heard]

[Savir translates the above and continues] How do you see the future relations between Israel and Egypt, if Israel continues to refuse any dialogue with the PLO?

[Basyuni] I would like to say here frankly that a solution to the Palestinian problem is the only effective way to reach the heart of the Egyptian people. I am sure that if we solve this problem the relations will be better and better. So we would like to see peace in all the area, comprehensive peace in our area. We will do our best for achieving this peace.

Palestinian Leaders React to Peres' Election Call

TA1512193488 Jerusalem Domestic Service in English 1800 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Excerpt] There has been a mixed reaction among moderate Palestinians in the territories to Foreign Minister Peres' call for elections in the areas. But Palestinians agree that any elections in the territories must be coordinated with the PLO. Shlomo Berger reports:

[Begin recording] [Berger] Gaza lawyer Fayiz Abu Rahmah says Palestinians in the territories will reject Foreign Minister Peres' call for elections.

[Abu Rahmah] The elections in the territories are meant to form a new leadership in the territories which will be an alternative to the PLO. So, this idea will be rejected by the people of the occupied areas and it will not work.

[Berger] AL-FAJR editor Hanna Sinyurah welcomed Peres' statement, but with reservations.

[Sinyurah] Mr Peres wants to establish good will. We are not against such good-willed intentions coming from both the Palestinian and the Israeli sides. If the latest consultations of the PLO... [changes thought] nobody is against elections. [passage omitted] [end recording]

15 Dec Coalition Meeting Fails; Talks To Continue

TA1612061288 Jerusalem Domestic Service in English 0500 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] Prime Minister Shamir and Foreign Minister Peres failed to reach a coalition agreement in their meeting late last night in Jerusalem. Sources in the Prime Minister's Office told the Voice of Israel that Shamir is

anxious to form a broad-based coalition government with Labor by the beginning of next week. Shamir and Peres are expected to meet again either this morning or Saturday night, at the latest.

Shamir has said he prefers a broadly-based government, but will not hesitate to form a narrow, right-wing government if an agreement cannot be reached with Labor.

Shamir Plans 'New Political Initiative'
TA1612065488 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0600 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] After forming his new government, Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir plans to present a new political initiative to counterbalance the dialogue between the United States and the PLO. Shamir's associates in the Likud say that the new plan may center around the implementation of unilateral autonomy for the Arab inhabitants of Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza. Our political correspondent 'Oz Frankel reports:

Those who expressed surprise at Yitzhaq Shamir's silence concerning the dialogue developing between Washington and 'Arafat were told by Shamir's associates that Shamir does not want to needlessly exacerbate the confrontation with the U.S. Administration. Shamir does not want to create the impression that Israel is speaking in two voices and, for the moment, he prefers to let Vice Prime Minister Peres do the talking.

Shamir's associates in the Likud did not conceal the fact that the recent developments have increased his desire for a broad-based government and for cooperation with Shim'on Peres and the Alignment, if such cooperation is indeed possible. We were told that Shamir understands that the U.S. move toward the PLO cannot be left without a political reaction. Israel must present an alternative peace plan, and in this context we were told that the prime minister does not reject various ideas.

Shamir's associates in the Likud are raising the familiar concept of unilateral autonomy between Israel and the local inhabitants, without foreign intervention. Yesterday Shim'on Peres spoke about political elections in the territories; the distance between these two proposals does not seem to be unbridgeable.

In any case, after forming a narrow or broad-based government Shamir intends to launch political activity. His associates are trying to refute the impression that the recent developments have left him indifferent in his positions.

Shamir is aware that with a new administration in the United States, with the contacts between Washington and the PLO, and with the uprising in the territories we are on the verge of a new year which will see a very active political process.

Likud, Small Parties Discuss Narrow Government
TA1612114088 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1100 16 Dec 88

[Report by party affairs correspondent Yaron Deqel]

[Text] A narrow-based government comprising the Likud, the religious parties, and the right-wing parties is once more on the agenda. As the negotiations with the Alignment have bogged down, the prime minister this morning initiated speedy activity in order to present a narrow-based government to the Knesset next week.

The Likud accuses the Alignment of showing no willingness to compromise on even one of the contentious issues, such as the settlements, the distribution of the portfolios—where the main stumbling block is the education portfolio which the Likud is demanding for itself—and the appointment of the chairman of the Knesset Finance Committee. While the Alignment is demanding that this post be manned by an Alignment member, the Likud has already promised the position to Agudat Yisra'el.

Shamir telephoned the leaders of several of the small parties this morning. The Likud's negotiating team met with Agudat Yisra'el and Degel Hatora to discuss the formation of a narrow-based government. The Likud members asked Degel Hatora to forego the demand that a member of that party be appointed director of the religious education administration.

Rabbi Avraham Ravitz, who heads the movement, told us that the problem remains unresolved—in other words, that Degel Hatora and perhaps even SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim] are still not automatic partners of the Likud.

On the other side, Labor Party Secretary General 'Uzi Bar'am has called on Peres and Rabin to consider terminating the negotiations with the Likud. His argument is that the latest political developments will make their participation in a joint government even more difficult.

No additional summit meeting involving Shamir, Peres, Rabin, and Arens has been set yet. If it is held, it will probably not be before tomorrow night.

Thus, the general tendency in the Likud right now is toward setting up a narrow-based government. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that this is only the current trend, because by the time the Sabbath ends, the wheel of fortune may turn once again.

Labor Party Doves Want New Terms To Join Likud

TA1512165888 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1600 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] The doves in the Labor Party called on their party to not rule out negotiations with the PLO. Our correspondent Razi Barqay reports that meeting in an emergency session, the forum of Labor Party doves passed a decision stating that the developments of the last 24 hours constitute a new chapter in the political process.

The signatories to the document include 'Ezer Weizman, Hayim Ramon, Ora Namir, Yosi Beilin, and Arye Eli'av. The forum members are now pressuring the Labor Party's leadership to change its conditions for joining a Likud-led government.

'Terrorist' Squad Exposed; 12 Arrested

TA1512152488 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1330 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] It was today released for publication that a terrorist squad that had been operating in the central Tel Aviv area, and that had set telephone exchange boxes and four cars on fire, has been exposed following a joint investigation by the Yarqon District police and the Shin Bet. Twelve people were arrested, including an Israeli resident of Moshav Avi'el suspected of supplying the squad with weapons.

One of the weapons found in the squad's possession was used in the murder of a resident of Umm al-Fahm approximately 6 months ago. The squad members are Israeli Arabs and residents of the territories who belonged to the PFLP and Fatah. The squad members were employed in a cafe in Tel Aviv's Atarim Square. They were instructed by their operators to sabotage Israel's economy. In addition to setting telephone exchange boxes and cars on fire, they intended to attack the central bus station in Herzliyya, spill oil, grease, and nails on main roads, burn military vehicles, and sabotage factories.

The investigation has been completed and the files on the case have been passed over to the military advocate general's office so that formal charges may be brought against the terrorists.

UNIFIL Asks IDF About Abducted Shi'ites

TA1512212288 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 2100 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] UNIFIL has asked the IDF for information about the whereabouts of four inhabitants of the Shi'ite village of Tibnin north of the security zone, after villagers said IDF soldiers took the four away from their fields this morning. Our correspondent Hayim Hecht reports that the men arrested include Jawad Qasafi, the regional Amal commander.

Riots broke out in Tibnin following the arrest of the four. Twenty armed youngsters seized a UNIFIL vehicle with four Irish soldiers on board, but they were later released.

Lahd 'Recuperating,' Taken Off Respirator

TA1612135988 Tel Aviv HATZOFE in Hebrew 16 Dec 88 p 1

[Text] A gradual improvement has been noted in the last few days in the condition of General Antoine Lahd, the South Lebanese Army commander, who has been hospitalized in the respiratory intensive care unit at the Haifa Rambam Medical Center since the attempt on his life on 7 November.

ITIM correspondent Me'ir Shoshani reports that Gen Lahd has been entirely disconnected from the respirator to which he was connected for almost 1 month. He is now recuperating and is capable of getting out of bed and sitting up in an armchair for a short time, during which he talks with his wife and visiting relatives.

Soldier Sentenced to Prison for Killing Villager

TA1512211188 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 2000 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] The military court of the IDF Central Command today sentenced a soldier to 3 years imprisonment, 18 months of which are to be a suspended sentence. The soldier had been convicted of killing a resident of the village of Biddu in the Ramallah District approximately 10 months ago. Our correspondent Karmela Menashe reports that the court rejected the defendant's claim that he and his fellow soldiers had been in mortal danger.

Further on Incidents, Casualties in Territories

3 Die in Nabulus Funeral Riot

TA1612102088 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1000 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] Three youths were killed in Nabulus this morning during a funeral that turned into a violent demonstration. Our correspondent Arye Gus reports that this morning, 15-year-old Ashraf Hajj Da'ud, who died of wounds suffered 3 weeks ago, was buried. Arab sources claim that during the funeral, soldiers fired at the procession.

Two youths, Yasin Sakhsir and Fayiz Saku, were killed by the shots. Another youth, Iyad Abu Hilal, died in the hospital. Our correspondent reports that Nabulus has been placed under curfew. Reports from the hospitals indicate that many wounded people were brought in for treatment.

Two people in critical condition were transferred to the Al-Maqasid Hospital in East Jerusalem. Military sources told our correspondent that the IDF is investigating the reports concerning the death of the youths.

Arab Sources on Nabulus Riot

NC1612120388 Paris AFP in English 1153 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] Jerusalem, Dec 16 (AFP)—Israeli troops shot dead five Palestinians and wounded at least 20 others as demonstrations erupted in the occupied West Bank on Friday after the funeral of a Nabulus youth who died of his wounds overnight, Palestinian sources said.

At least nine of the wounded were in serious condition, said the sources, after the Nabulus area saw some of the bloodiest clashes to take place since the start of a Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories more than a year ago.

The Israeli army clamped a curfew on Nabulus, home to some 50,000 people, Israeli military officials said.

Palestinian sources said Yasin Sakhsir, aged 18, Fayiz Sakou, 20, Iyad Abu Hilal, 18, and Nasir Hawash, 19, were killed in Nabulus when soldiers opened fire on a group of young Palestinians attending the funeral of Ashraf Al-Haj Muhammad, 15, who was gravely wounded by soldiers in the city on November 25.

In the nearby village of Bayt Wazan, 26-year-old Nidal Shafiq was fatally shot in the head by soldiers, the Palestinian sources added.

The six deaths brought to 309 the number of Palestinians shot dead by Israeli troops or settlers since the outbreak of an uprising on December 9, 1987. Several more have died of other causes in connection with the uprising.

University Closure Extended

TA1412160588 Jerusalem AL-SHA'B in Arabic 13 Dec 88 p 1

[Text] Jerusalem—AL-SHA'B has learned that the Israeli authorities have decided to extend the closure of universities and higher institutes in the West Bank until 28 February 1989.

Demonstrations in E. Jerusalem

TA1512155488 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1500 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] Seven suspected demonstrators and stone-throwers were arrested today in East Jerusalem. Our correspondent Yosi Qoren reports that the police used tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse riots in Wadi al-Jawz and near the Rockefeller Museum. Stones were thrown and roadblocks were erected near Herod's Gate and Damascus Gate. The windshield of a bus was damaged on Salah al-Din Street.

Tear Gas Used on Stonethrowers

TA1612115588 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1100 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] Today at noon, Border Police and police vehicles were damaged by stones thrown at them on Ha'ofel Road near the Temple Mount. There were no injuries in the incident. Our correspondent Yosi Qoren reports that the policemen dispersed the stone throwers with tear gas. The area is currently calm.

Second IDF Team Departs for Armenia 16 Dec

TA1612094188 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0830 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] A second IDF team left early this morning for Armenia aboard three Hercules planes. The team, which includes 47 members, will concentrate on providing medical assistance. Our correspondent 'Amos Har'el reports:

The three Hercules planes left Lod Air Force base for the Soviet Union early this morning. The planes took off consecutively at 0350, 0430, and 0630. This second IDF rescue team is headed by Colonel Micky Weiner, the deputy chief medical officer. The first team left for Armenia early Sunday morning. This team, which includes 47 members, will supply medical equipment and continue the work of the earlier team.

The team is carrying a field hospital specializing in pediatrics and includes IDF soldiers and Magen David Adom workers. The first two planes landed in Tbilisi, Georgia, due to bad weather conditions in Yerevan.

Drug Dealers Detained in Anti-Drug Operation

TA1012184488 [Editorial report] Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew at 0800 GMT on 6 December reports that "60 heroin units were found yesterday in a baby's diaper in the family's residence in Ra'anana. The baby was asleep." Tel Aviv 'AL HAMISHMAR in Hebrew on 7 December reports on page 15 that "22 drug dealers were detained by the Tel Aviv police yesterday as part of a 6-month-long anti-drug operation carried out by undercover agents in the central part of the country." An unspecified quantity of heroin and various implements were also seized.

King Husayn Retu
JN1512193888 Amm
rns From France, Egypt
1900 GMT 15 Dec 8
nan Domestic Service in Arabic
88

[Excerpts] His Maje
Queen Nur returned
esty King Husayn and Her Majesty
a working visit that l
home from Cairo tonight following
talks with His Excell
lasted a few hours. His majesty held
Mubarak, president
llency President Muhammad Husni
the latest developme
of the Arab Republic of Egypt, on
U.S. decision to ope
ents in the Palestine question, the
Executive Committe
n direct dialogue with the PLO, PLO
at the UN General A
ee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat's speech
of all this on the M
ssembly in Geneva, and the impact
omitted]
Middle East peace process. [passage

Prime Minister Zay
Court Chief Marwan
yd al-Rifa'i and Royal Hashemite
the king.
n al-Qasim returned with his majesty

Al-Khasawinah Pr
JN1512201488 Amm
raises U.S. Decision on PLO
1900 GMT 15 Dec 8
nan Domestic Service in Arabic
88

[Text] In a statement
Dr Hani al-Khasawi
to REUTER, Information Minister
is worthy of attenti
inah said that the new U.S. decision
direct dialogue betwe
ion because it will lead to official
PLO—the Palestinia
een the U.S. Administration and the
resentative.
an Arab people's sole legitimate rep-

Dr al-Khasawinah ac
tial for the peace pr
dded that this development is essen-
party concerned wi
rocess because the PLO is the basic
what is most import
th the Palestine question. He said
was made shortly b
ant about the U.S. decision is that it
assumes his task as
before President-elect George Bush
the way for the new
U.S. president and because it paves
role in promoting th
administration to play its expected
comprehensive settle
e peace process to reach a peaceful,
lement in the region.

Paper Interviews A
JN1512174388 Amm
Al-Rifa'i on King's Contacts
1450 GMT 15 Dec 8
nan PETRA-JNA in Arabic
88

[Text] London, 15 D
al-Rifa'i has said th
Dec (PETRA)—Prime Minister Zayd
his European tours a
at His Majesty King Husayn, in all
explains the Palestin
and all his contacts with world states,
his majesty contacts
nian stand and asks the countries that
and comprehensive
s to adopt stands to help begin a just
peace process.

In an interview wit
lished yesterday, Alh
the newspaper AL-HAYAH pub-
that PNC resolution
l-Rifa'i added that Jordan believes
the international pe
s have paved the way for convening
dan has no specific
eace conference. Consequently, Jor-
Palestinian and Arab
demands and is only explaining the
b stand and informing all states that, for the first time, there are no obstacles from the Palestinian and Arab side to hinder the peace process and the convening of the international peace conference.

Al-Rifa'i said that these states must support the Arab and Palestinian stand and work to change the intransigent Israeli stand—the real obstacle hindering peace efforts.

The prime minister added that His Majesty King Husayn believes that the EC has a major and distinguished role to play in approximating the views of the parties concerned on the one hand and particularly in approximating the views of the Soviet Union and the United States on the other, as securing a Soviet-U.S. agreement and a similar agreement among other members of the UN Security Council in this regard is essential if the international conference is to convene in the near future.

Al-Rifa'i referred to the economic cooperation agreement signed between Jordan and France during His Majesty King Husayn's Paris visit and said that a joint ministerial committee comprising the Jordanian planning minister and the French trade minister will follow up this cooperation, meet once a year in Amman and Paris on a rotating basis, and make decisions on bilateral economic and trade relations.

He said there will also be technical subcommittees to supervise and follow up implementation of the decisions of the ministerial committee, which in turn will review what has been accomplished throughout the year and what is to be accomplished in future years.

In reply to a question on Arab financial commitments toward Jordan, Al-Rifa'i said: We will be grateful for any assistance that we receive. However, he added that we cannot continue to pursue a financial and economic situation not based on reliance on our own potentials. He indicated that the total of foreign debts is less than the Arab financial commitments promised to Jordan—the commitments that have not been honored.

The prime minister said that the measures taken by Jordan in the economic field partly sought to increase investment and savings opportunities in the Kingdom. He added that Jordanian and Arab citizens have begun to feel that investment opportunities in Jordan are better than they are abroad.

TIMES Reports Trade Agreement With USSR
JN1412074388 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 14 Dec 88 p 3

[Text] Amman (PETRA, J.T.)—Jordan and the Soviet Union have concluded an agreement on trade between them to be conducted on an equitable basis in a manner that would achieve a balance in trade and increase the volume of exchanged products, according to the head of a Jordanian delegation which visited Moscow for economic talks in the past week.

The two sides also agreed on Jordan to organise a fair of its national products in Moscow, to be allowed to sell goods worth between $5 and $10 million directly, but that agreement on the final trade figure in this context will be made during a meeting between a joint committee which will convene in Moscow in the first quarter of 1989, according to the delegation leader, Ministry of Industry and Trade Secretary General Muhammad al-Saqqaf.

Al-Saqqaf, who returned to Amman from Moscow early Tuesday, said discussions with the Soviet side covered a wide variety of subjects mainly concentrating on economic and trade cooperation.

"The talks were held in an atmosphere marked with complete understanding and a strong desire on both sides to promote economic ties and increase the volume of trade between them" Al-Saqqaf noted.

According to Ministry of Industry and Trade sources, Jordan at present imports iron ore, timber, paper, equipment and chemicals from the Soviet Union and hopes to sell that country phosphate and other products.

Al-Saqqaf's week-long visit to Moscow followed the formation of the joint economic committee that has been entrusted with promoting bilateral cooperation in trade.

Al-Saqqaf said that one of the Soviet republics has expressed desire to purchase 40 types of Jordanian products including toothpaste, tissue paper, cosmetics, woollen cloth, cotton material, socks, gas ranges, nylon bags, refrigerators, washing machines, domestic appliances, furniture, nails, wooden doors, metal pipes, leather shoes and frame for eyeglasses, leather suitcases, paint, yeast pesticides, ball point pens, detergents and electric materials.

According to Al-Saqqaf, the Jordanian delegation informed the Soviet side that Jordan wishes to purchase the following products from the Soviet Union: iron ore, timber, paper, chemical and industrial materials, auto spare parts and machinery, as well as certain types of glass.

He said the Soviet side agreed to join Jordan in setting up a plant to produce fertilisers and import 50 per cent of the total production, as well as helping to market the rest of the production in other countries.

A joint committee was set up to conduct a feasibility study on the project before further steps can be taken, Al-Saqqaf said.

He added that the Soviet side agreed to conduct a study on a Jordanian plant to produce timber for industry and to supply the plant with raw material.

According to Al-Saqqaf, the Jordanian side proposed that the Soviet Union send tourist groups on visits to Jordan, and that the subject be added on the agenda of the joint committee meeting due to convene in the coming year.

Al-Saqqaf said that the Ministries of Tourism in both countries will follow up the subject after the committee meeting.

USSR's Nishanov Arrives With Delegation 15 Dec

JN1512185788 Amman Domestic Service in English 1700 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] A Soviet delegation led by Mr Rafik Nishanov, member of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, arrived in Amman today for a 4-day visit to Jordan.

Mr Nishanov said in a statement upon arrival to discuss with Jordanian officials ways of fostering relations between Jordan and the Soviet Union as well as international issues of common concern. [sentence as heard]

Meets With Al-Lawzi

JN1512211288 Amman Television Service in English 2000 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] The speaker of the Upper House of Parliament, Mr Ahmad al-Lawzi, had declared that Jordan, led by his majesty the king, is proud of its links of friendship with the Soviet Union.

Speaking at a meeting with Mr Rafik Nishanov, member of the Supreme Soviet and first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in Soviet Uzbekistan, Mr Al-Lawzi said that Jordan was working to bring about a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. He added that such a settlement should be based on the principles of land for peace and on UN resolutions, particularly Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

The speaker emphasised the necessity of convening an international Middle East peace conference with the participation of all parties involved in the conflict, indcluding the PLO. Mr Al-Lawzi emphasised that the Palestinian uprising in the occupied areas was aimed at rejecting the Israeli occupation.

The Soviet guest lauded the Palestinian uprising. He also paid tribute to his majesty the king's efforts to bring about peace in the region.

Japanese Parliamentary Delegation Visits 12 Dec

JN1212132888 Amman Domestic Service in English 1200 GMT 12 Dec

[Text] His majesty the king received at Al-Nadwah Palace this morning chairman of the foreign affairs committee in the Japanese Parliament. Discussions during the meeting dealt with promoting bilateral relations and Japan's role in supporting efforts in the Middle East area. The meeting was held in the presence of Prime Minister Zayd al-Rifa'i and the Japanese ambassador to Jordan.

The Prime Minister Mr Zayd al-Rifa'i later received in his office the visiting Japanese official and discussed with him the current situation in the area and bilateral relations.

Departs Following Talks

JN1312162288 Amman PETRA-JNA in Arabic 1405 GMT 13 Dec 88

[Text] Amman—Etharo Ethoyama, [name as received] chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Japanese Diet, and his accompanying delegation left Amman this morning after a 2-day visit to Jordan during which he met with His Majesty King Husayn, Prime Minister Zayd al-Rifa'i, and a number of senior officials.

The guest delegation's talks dealt with developments in the Middle East, Japan's role in supporting peace efforts, and ways to strengthen bilateral relations between the two friendly countries—particularly in the economic field. The Japanese delegation also visited some scientific and cultural institutions.

AL-RA'Y on U.S. 'Positive Step' Toward PLO

JN1612085088 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 16 Dec 88 pp 1, 19

[Editorial: "A Positive Step"]

[Text] Finally, the United States took a positive step. It decided to enter into direct dialogue with the PLO, designating the U.S. ambassador in Tunis to perform this task. The decision was met with a hue and cry in the Zionist entity, with its political leadership considering the decision a source of anxiety and a change heralding danger.

The U.S. decision avoided recognition of the independent Palestinian state. This contradicts Security Council Resolution No 181, which the United States supported and used as the basis for its recognition of Israel. However, Washington's agreement to hold a dialogue with the PLO fits as an introduction to an important complementary step; namely, acceptance of participation in the international conference and expediting its convening.

It is no secret that the convening of the conference on the bases of Security Council Resolutions No 181, 242, and 338 will get the peace process in the region on the move. It will also be harmonious with the current international detente, especially since our region is the only region in the world that has not yet seen true international action to end the tension brought about by the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Therefore, Washington is called upon to match its dialogue with the PLO with an effective effort to expedite the convening of the international conference, as the time factor is extremely important. Washington is also called upon not to yield to impossible Israeli demands to foil the Palestinian peace plan—foremost of which is the demand to stop the Palestinian uprising, which Israel claims is an act of terrorism!

It should be remembered that the uprising is a legitimate revolution against Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories. The United States itself entered into negotiations with the Vietcong at the peak of the war in Vietnam. It did not demand that the Vietcong lay down their arms as a condition to bring about peace in Vietnam.

It is, therefore, natural that the uprising should continue until a just and comprehensive peace that restores to the Palestinian people their usurped lands and enables them to exercise self-determination over their national soil is achieved.

Meanwhile, it should be remembered that the U.S. decision is no substitute for speedy Arab action that reinforces Arab solidarity—one of the most important indispensable requisites at this critical stage for supporting the PLO and the uprising and for expediting the convening of the international conference.

This is the requisite which Jordan has long been working to achieve through shuttle visits by His Majesty King Husayn to a number of Arab capitals and his talks with their leaders. The talks aimed at improving Arab performance—including reinstating sisterly Egypt into the Arab League, and ammending the League's Charter in a way harmonious with this performance.

It should also be remembered that the U.S. step is not an alternative to intensive action by Arabs to encourage Washington to move forward and take the substantial step of convening the international conference, especially since all signs indicate that the Israeli leadership intends to intensify pressure on Washington to sabotage its dialogue with the PLO and prevent it from joining the conference.

It should also be noted that there is a need to step up Arab efforts in order to maintain the strong support of the Soviet Union, the EC, and the entire world for the international conference and to motivate these countries

to encourage Washington to expedite the convening of the conference. Undoubtedly, His Majesty King Husayn's successful efforts in Paris provide a model for such work.

No one is calling for exaggeration in the evaluation of the U.S. step. However, this does not prevent the admission that it is a positive step, worthy of attention and follow up. Washington should, however, realize that achieving a balance in its relations with the Arabs and Israel, and shouldering its responsibility through the call for an international conference, expediting its convening, and seeking its success, so that the Palestinian rights can be restored, is better for it and its international prestige, status, and interests in the region than isolation and standing in the same trench with the Israeli aggressors.

SAWT AL-SHA'B on King's Role in U.S. Move

JN1612111088 Amman SAWT AL-SHA'B in Arabic 16 Dec 88 pp 1, 16

[Editorial: "Husayn's Efforts Have Borne Fruit"]

[Text] In all his visits, contacts, and world moves, His Majesty King Husayn devoted all his energy to explain the recent Palestinian stand—characterized by realism and moderation. He called for the adoption of practical stands to help start the process of a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

King Husayn used his outstanding international reputation and respectable world status in the East and West in the interest of the Arab nation's legitimate rights and just causes and in the service of world peace, which cannot be stabilized unless existing international problems are handled with justice and right.

King Husayn's efforts—harmonious with the efforts of his Arab brothers—have helped achieve a decisive historic turning point toward ending the agony of the Palestinian Arab people, attaining their legitimate national rights, and saving them from Zionist oppression. The new U.S. move is a fruit of the long patience and painstaking contacts to drive this superpower to show integrity and shoulder its responsibity toward world peace. King Husayn's efforts had a clear effect in introducing this U.S. movement from a total bias toward the Zionist aggressor to an understanding and recognition of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

We believe that this recognition is an important step toward convening the committee that would prepare for the international conference for peace in the Middle East.

What is hoped for now is that the United States will begin pressuring its strategic ally, Israel, so that it yields to the will of the international community. It still stands alone against international legitimacy and world pe swims against the sweeping current of peace, and t the policy of force, upon which the peoples of the w look with outrage.

King Husayn has led the trend of Arab moderation remained honest to his convictions that right, just and peace will eventually triumph. The current eve and developments are proving the validity of his vi and the absolute soundness of his policy.

The just Arab cause has achieved great successes: Zionist aggression has been isolated and exposed, U.S. position has seen a breakthrough, the Europ stand has been polarized, and world public opinion been reached and moved toward the Arab right a justice.

The wheel of a just and comprehensive peace began move despite the Zionist arrogance, which will even ally bow under the escalating glorious uprising and atmosphere of international detente, which does allow departure from its principles through the achie ment of temporary gains that may endanger world pea

Our region is on the threshold of a new stage. We ho this stage will help bring prosperity and security to t region, which the Zionist ambitions have sunk in w and massacres over 4 bloody decades.

There is much to the credit of King Husayn in what h been achieved and in the positive results that will pr ceed from these achievements toward maintaining t legitimate national rights of the Palestinian Arab peop stopping the bloodshed, maintaing the resources, ar building the future on this land.

Dialogue 'Destined' To Open Way for Settlement

JN1612094688 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 16 Dec 88 pp 1, 14

[Editorial: "The Husayn-Mubarak Meeting and th Major Political Changes"]

[Text] His Majesty King Husayn's meeting in Cairo wit his brother His Excellency President Husni Mubara comes amid very important developments and dee changes that the two great Arab leaders, through rapi work and direct contacts with the United States an PLO, have helped bring about and crystallize.

It can be said that the coordinated Arab efforts o Jordan, Egypt, the PLO, and other Arab countries hav ultimately achieved a result that should have bee achieved several years ago. By this, we mean Washing ton's reversal of its decision to boycott the PLO and it agreement to enter into serious dialogue with it.

Undoubtedly, this U.S. decision has created a new situation in the Middle East and provided objective potential for movement toward a just and lasting peace

in the region as never before, especially since the hostile U.S position toward the PLO did not allow U.S. diplomacy to achieve any significant success; indeed, it kept its Middle East record a series of failures, setbacks, and retreats.

Therefore, we view as extremely important this major turn in the U.S. stand regarding the Palestine question. The dialogue and serious direct contacts with the PLO are destined to open a wide road for movement toward a peaceful settlement that takes into consideration the interests of all concerned parties, and especially that satisfies the legitimate Palestinian aspirations.

What makes the declared U.S. move more important is that it deprives the Israeli extremists of the last political cover for their intransigent position, which used the U.S. weight and diplomatic status as a superpower to serve Israel's most degenarate interests: Occupation, expansion, conquering the will of another people by steel and fire, and continuous perptration of the most horrendous barbaric policies without fear of international punishment.

As we view Washington's decision to open a dialogue with the PLO as extremely important, we recall with all pride and respect the sacrifices of the uprising, which was the main factor in achieving this result.

Simultaneously, we recall the importance of the coordinated Arab diplomatic effort, which, in its turn, played a very important role in translating trends into tangible facts and political stands, in the way seen in Algiers, Geneva, Stockholm, Washington, Amman, Cairo, and other capitals near and far.

Waite Reportedly Punished for Trying To Escape

PM1512165388 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 15 Dec 88 pp 1, 2

[Unattributed "exclusive" report: "Terry Waite Tried To Escape From Detention in the Suburb; the British Hostage Suffered Health Problems and Was Subjected to 'Harsh Punishment'"]

[Excerpt] Beirut, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—Western diplomatic sources in Beirut have revealed that British hostage Terry Waite, envoy of the archbishop of Canterbury, tried to escape from his kidnappers during the fighting which broke out in Beirut's southern suburb between Amal and Hizballah fighters at the end of last month.

They added that the kidnappers discovered the escape attempt and subjected him to "harsh punishment," as a result of which he suffered some health problems and required treatment by a doctor from the American University of Beirut specialized in the digestive system.

The sources said that the kidnappers consider Waite to be a big catch and the most important hostage in their hands since the announcement of the execution of U.S. hostage William Buckley, described by his kidnappers at the time as a CIA agent.

The sources added that Waite is now in good health but that efforts to release him had stopped when it became clear that the kidnappers prefer to wait, particularly until U.S. President-elect George Bush assumes power officially.

Meanwhile it has been reported that during the fighting at the end of last month the Amal Movement made some advance toward two positions where the Western hostages were held, the first being a military barracks in the Madi quarter at the crossing point and the other the ground floor of a religious and poltical center where the leaders of the side considered responsible for holding the hostages meet.

The sources reporting this said that Hizballah decided to shift the battle to West Beirut despite the Syrian Army presence there as an answer to the Amal advance. It also threatened to take extraordinary measures if the Amal advance continued. That has been interpreted as a threat to kill the hostages to prevent them falling into the attackers' hands.

The conclusion is that the Western hostages are in the two above-mentioned centers, that is the Madi quarter and Bi'r al-'Abid, and that no hostage can be moved without orders from a tripartite committee in charge of the hostages.

It has also been reported that the hostages in the two centers have been given numbers and are called, not by their names, but by their numbers to make it impossible for the hostages to recognize one another. Furthermore, after the repeated Amal-Hizballah clashes and the spread of rumors about the whereabouts of the hostages, the hostages were moved to different places but in the same area, and their numbers have been changed.

The sources said that those holding the hostages issue statements every now and then threatening to execute one hostage or another as a reminder to the states to which the hostages belong that they must make more concessions if they want them released.

They added that a British-Iranian agreement for the release of British hostages Waite, reporter John McCarthy, and teacher Brian Keenan nearly entered the implementation stage, but at the last moment Iran decided to wait and it was said that the release of the hostages would require more complex political and financial negotiations that would also cover the Western military presence in the Gulf area and such matters as armaments and spare parts.

According to some circles in Beirut, the release of the French hostages was very costly to France, which paid 6 million pounds sterling through different channels in addition to promising the gradual withdrawal of naval units from the Gulf.

Those holding the hostages, they say, have become the hostages of their own hostages in that they cannot release them without a high price, which the states concerned cannot pay, particularly as the payment of ransom is extremely embarrassing to those countries. [passage omitted]

Release of 2 Hostages Expected by Christmas

NC1612083588 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0831 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] Security and diplomatic sources in West Beirut have reported that the kidnappers of foreign hostages will release two hostages before Christmas. Terry Anderson might be one of the two to be released.

Conflicting Reports on UNIFIL Kidnappings

UNIFIL Officer Kidnapped

NC1512170688 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1703 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] According to a security report from the South, an armed group kidnapped an officer from the Irish UNIFIL contingent this afternoon. The report did not mention the name of the kidnapped Irish officer.

Personnel Questioned, Released

NC1512174688 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] According to a report from Al-Naqurah, armed gunmen in Tibnin stopped an officer and another member of the Irish UNIFIL contingent this afternoon. They questioned the two UNIFIL members for some time and then released them. The circumstances of the incident still have to be clarified.

4 Irish Soldiers Missing

NC1612123388 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1145 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] Radio Free Lebanon has learned that four Irish UNIFIL soldiers are missing and that their whereabouts is unknown. UN forces in the South have set up roadblocks, closed the roads, and prevented car traffic in their areas of operation. It has been reported that the soldiers have been returned, but there has been no confirmation of this yet. The roads are still closed.

Amal Movement leader Nabih Birri has accused Hizballah of being behind the disappearance of the four Irish soldiers.

3 Soldiers Reportedly Abducted

NC1612133288 Paris AFP in English 1307 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] Tyre, Lebanon, Dec 16 (AFP)—Gunmen abducted three Irish soldiers from the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) on Friday in south Lebanon, regional security service sources said.

The soldiers were walking near the government hospital in Tibnin, some 500 meters (yards) from the headquarters of the Irish UNIFIL contingent, when the unidentified gunmen pulled alongside in a car and forced them to get aboard, the sources said.

Four UNIFIL soldiers were abducted Thursday in Tibnin but released shortly afterwards.

The abductions came after Lebanese sources said Israeli intelligence agents kidnapped three pro-Iranian Moslem fundamentalists early Thursday in the village, just north of Israel's self-proclaimed "security zone" in southern Lebanon.

[Meanwhile, Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic at 1215 GMT on 16 December reports: "A UNIFIL source in Al-Naqurah denied this afternoon that he has any knowledge of the kidnapping of four Irish soldiers today."]

'Sources' Say Israelis Abduct Fundamentalists

NC1512184688 Paris AFP in English 1838 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] Tyre, Lebanon, Dec 15 (AFP)—The Israeli army on Thursday abducted three pro-Iranian Moslem fundamentalists in southern Lebanon, concurring sources said, and residents of the region retaliated by briefly detaining four United Nations observers near the Lebanese village of Tibnin.

Some 10 Israeli intelligence officers on Thursday morning drove to near that southern Lebanese village outside Israel's self-declared security zone in two unmarked cars and forced the three militants into their vehicles, police here said.

There was no confirmation by Israel.

The pro-Iranian Hizballah's Voice of Islam radio said the Israeli army had abducted three members of the Believers' Resistance movement, a breakaway group from the Syrian-backed Amal Shi'ite militia.

Residents of Tibnin retaliated by seizing four members of the United Nations Interim Forces in Lebanon. They were released a short while later, regional security forces said.

VOL Reports Arrest

NC1512204088 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 2015 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] According to security sources in the South, the Israeli army arrested three pro-Iranian fundamentalists in the village of Tibnin today. The inhabitants of the village retaliated by detaining four UNIFIL soldiers briefly and then released them.

The Hizballah radio, the Voice of Islam, transmitting from Al- Biqa', said that the Israeli army kidnapped Jawad Qasafi, the official in charge of the Believers' Resistance [al-Muqawamah al-Mu'minah] in the area, and two other members of this group.

Hizballah Radio on 'Arafat's 'Great Treason'

NC1612091288 (Clandestine) Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic to Lebanon 0630 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Political commentary: "The Treason"]

[Text] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. Yasir 'Arafat has committed great treason, equaling the one committed by Anwar al-Sadat. There is no difference between the two perfidies except that (?the latter) went to Tel Aviv and delivered a speech in which he announced his abandonment of all principles and sacred places.

The former wanted to come t[o] the occupied territories to deliver the speech that would[d] obliterate the old no's and to announce his relinquishme[nt] of even the territories if this would satisfy Shultz and Shamir. But 'Arafat's fear of Palestine's stones, children and youths prevented him from coming and knocking o[n] the doors of Tel Aviv.

He then took the alternative and delivered a speech in Geneva in which he said what he had meant to say in the Knesset or in New York, whi[ch] refused to receive him because his basket still had s[ome] shabby papers. It is a treason that brings shame an[d] disgrace and bleeds the hearts. It is an act of comp[lete] write-off of a people numbering (?millions) and wh[ich] is dispersed and scattered. It is an act of eliminati[ng] the Palestinian issue.

We can say that Palestine and i[ts] issue were butchered on Wednesday and that the Pale[stinian] child was slaughtered. The Palestinian woman was [word indistinct] on Wednesday and the Palestinia[n] youth has gone into the eternal prison on the hope that [the] miracle would happen and liberate him.

This is what 'Arafat wanted for Palestine and its people after clearly recognizing the Jew[ish] entity in Palestine in return for getting a chair at a roundtable with a U.S. official opposite him, or at th[e] table of the so-called international conference, and o[n] the basis of a hope that the opening would come and t[he] Americans would be pleased with 'Arafat and install h[im] as a civil governor of the strip or the mayor of the [West] Bank municipality, and consequently he would get r[id] of the Arabs' chatterings and free himself from their problems and conflicts and enter the club of the Arab r[egimes].

The question here is: What does 'Arafat aim to do from all these concessions and this fr[ee] sale? Does the PLO chairman have information that the international conference is imminent? Does 'Arafa[t] have a guarantee that he will attend and participate in this conference if it is held? Or does 'Arafat want to put Israel in a tight corner and force it politically and diplom[atically] to accept him as a negotiator and a partner in a land that is not sufficient for it, in a land that it is working to expand on the basis of the well-known Zioni[st] plan?

Or has 'Arafat guaranteed for him[self] the international confidence and backing for impos[ing] the establishment of the Palestinian state on part of Palestine?

The only clear thing that can be said now is that the international conference is out of reach and almost impossible to hold, at this stage notion has not yet ripened in th[at] least, because this because Israel has rejected it. If [the] United States and Israel in a tight corner and force 'Arafat wants to put negotiator and a partner, then h[im] to accept him as a anyone else that the countries th[at] he must know before created the Jewish statelet in Palest[ine] have set up and it and pressure it for his sake. time will not abandon these countries' interests are more important and [word indistinct] than the interests of all other peoples. The reason is that Israel is the sole protector and defender of the interests of the countries that have created it and that are backing it and providing it with the requisites for existence and with the conditions tyo (?commit aggression) and practice terrorism.

'Arafat believes that Israel is now in a tight corner after his concessions and because of the crisis sweeping it, but the history of this statelet has taught us that it can evade pressures exerted on it and can render lax all the resolutions taken against it if these resolutions are made. Israel depends on a number of options in these cases.

Either it launches a war after preparing the atmosphere and conditions to divert the attention of the world to what is taking place and make it forget all the [word indistinct] plans and resolutions, or it exerts pressure through its lobby that is everywhere, even in Russia, in order to reduce the pressure on it and return the ball to the Arab and Palestinian court. Israel is the architect of the plan to control the Arab world.

It will not abandon this plan as 'Arafat and some Arab leaders believe, because it is not fighting a plan in the region but is disciplining those who are trying to evade its control. This is the method followed by Israel with the majority of the Arab regimes.

We can only say that the only plan that has started to confront Israel and its plot is the [words indistinct] that is aimed at complete liberation and [word indistinct] colonialism. It is the one that will remain and succeed, because it benefits the people.

As to the plans of 'Arafat and his group, they are only like cream that will disappear, and only what is right remains. And the end is best for the righteous. [Koranic verse]

Hizballah's Al-Tufayli Attacks Shams al-Din

NC1612072888 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0545 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] Hizballah Consultative Council member Shaykh Subhi al-Tufayli has declared that Shaykh Muhammad Mahdi Shams al-Din, deputy chairman of the Higher Islamic Shi'ite Council, is not a Shi'ite authority. He accused Shams al-Din of furthering the conflict between Amal and Hizballah.

In an interview with AL-DIYAR paper, Al-Tufayli said that the Amal Movement's invitation to work at an operations room in the South is only meant to pass the time. He said that the Shi'ites' position is getting worse and that the plot is heading toward its goals. He also said that Hizballah is not connected to the issue of the foreign hostages in Lebanon in any way.

Al-Huss Receives Iranian Envoy, Velayati Message
LD1512201688 Tehran IRNA in English 1821 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] Beirut, Dec. 15, IRNA—Iran's charge d'affaires in Beirut handed a message from Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati to Acting Premier Salim al-Huss today.

Huss who also holds the foreign minister's portfolio, discussed expansion of cooperation and economic ties with the Iranian official.

Br. Niknam told IRNA that Velayati's message dealt with the Geneva peace negotiations including the Iraqi regime's obstructions.

Nasirite Leader Sa'd Leaves for Moscow
NC1412171388 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1630 GMT 14 Dec 88

[Text] Musatafa Sa'd, leader of the Nasirite Popular Organization, left for Moscow on an official visit today. While there, he is scheduled to meet with a number of Soviet officials.

Four Explosions in W. Beirut; No Casualties
NC1512195888 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1945 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] Four explosions shook West Beirut at approximately 2100 today. The first explosion resulted from the detonation of an explosive charge that had been placed under a Mercedes 200 near the Zuhayli gas station in the Cola area. The second explosion occurred behind the Tallat al-Khayyat garden, but no casualties were reported. Security sources have not specified the areas where the two other explosions occurred.

Further on Explosions
NC1512220988 Paris AFP in English 2155 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] Beirut Dec 15 (AFP)—Four explosions rocked parts of Moslem West Beirut Thursday evening, two of them near Syrian military checkpoints, but there were no casualties, police said.

The explosions were reportedly caused by dynamite planted in rubbish dumps. Damage was described as slight.

Positions held by Syrian troops, in Beirut since February 1987, have repeatedly been targeted for such bomb attacks.

Group Claims Attack on Syrian Troops, Casualties
NC1512213788 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 2045 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] In a telephone contact with Voice of Lebanon tonight, Unit 705 of the Shaykh Subhi al-Salih forces announced that members of the group attacked a position of the Syrian occupation forces near the U.S. Embassy in West Beirut at approximately 2130 today.

Three Syrians were killed and an unspecified number were injured in the attack, which was carried out with machineguns and grenade, the unit stated.

Syrians Unload Ammunition, Rockets in W. Beirut
NC1612061888 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0415 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] According to security sources, three Syrian Army trucks carrying amnunition and rockets entered West Beirut yesterday and unloaded them at an Amal Movement position in Al-Bastah.

Syrian 'Elements' 'Beat Up' 6th Brigade Officer
NC1612071688 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0545 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] An argument broke out between a first lieutenant from the 6th Brigade and Syrian intelligence elements in front of the Abu Khidr Restaurant in Corniche al-Mazra'ah in West Beirut at midnight last night. Consequently, the Syrian intelligence men beat up the 6th Brigade officer.

Army, Amal Close Beirut Crossing Points
NC1612111688 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1055 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] According to security reports we have just received, people traveling from West Beirut to the eastern area are being harrassed by soldiers of the 6th Brigade deployed at the al-'Ijjah crossing point. It is reported that the Amal Movement has closed the Museum crossing point, banned all civilian vehicles carrying travelers to and from the airport, and also banned the movement of cars belonging to political figures.

The reports also say that a security incident took place among Amal gunmen and gunfire was heard. Syrian intelligence men intervened to end this incident.

Our radio learned that the reason for it was a dispute at the Museum crossing point between two Amal groups: The first wanted to open it to all travelers, while the second group wanted to keep it closed to everyone.

Resistance Fighters Attack Haddathah Center

NC1612095788 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 0900 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] Resistance fighters attacked the Haddathah center this morning using rockets and automatic weapons. The center was completely destroyed. The resistance artillery also shelled the agent Lahd militia positions in Bayt Yahun, Haddathah, and Rshaf. These operations took place following the arrest of resistance commander Jawad [second name indistinct] in Tibnin.

SLA Repulse Attack in South, Kill 2 Hizballah

NC1612133688 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1145 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] The South Lebanese Army [SLA] today repulsed an attack against its position in Al-Shumariyah, killing two of the attackers, who belonged to Hizballah. SLA units subsequently launched a wide-scale raking operation, shelling concentrations of the extremist Muslim organizations in Haris in reprisal for a rocket attack on its positions in Haddathah.

The SLA also discovered three explosive charges at the entrance to the 'Ayn Qinya Village. The charges were dismantled.

Israeli Aircraft in Mock Raids over Sidon, Camps

NC1612080988 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 0800 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] Israeli warplanes carried out mock raids at low altitude over the camps and the Sidon area at 0915, drawing antiaircraft fire.

Al-Zu'bi Receives Japanese Parliament Official

JN1312135888 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1215 GMT 13 Dec 88

[Text] Damascus—Prime Minister Mahmud al-Zu'bi received at 1100 today Mr Etharo Ethoyama, chairman of the foreign affairs committee in the Japanese parliament and his accompanying delegation. The meeting was attended by Shakir al-Sa'id, head of the Arab and foreign affairs committee in the People's Assembly, and the Japanese ambassador in Damascus.

After welcoming the guest delegation, Al-Zu'bi reviewed the Arab-Israeli conflict and Syria's position, which calls for and supports a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

He pointed out Israel's rejection of peace, its intransigence and adherence to the occupation of the Arab land, and its denial of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian Arab people, represented by the right to repatriation, self-determination, and the establishment of their independent state on their soil. The talks dealt with bilateral relations, especially ways to promote and boost economic relations between the two countries.

Hizballah Delegation Meets Khaddam, Kan'an

NC1212071988 Beirut Voice of National Resistance in Arabic 0600 GMT 12 Dec 88

[Text] Syrian Vice President 'Abd al-Halim Khaddam received a Hizballah delegation yesterday in Damascus in the presence of Staff Brigadier General Ghazi Kan'an, chief of the security and reconnaissance service in the Syrian Arab forces in Lebanon.

Husayn al-Musawi, head of the delegation, asserted to AFP that rapprochement between Hizballah and the Amal Movement is proceeding on the right course and that contacts had been held between the two sides.

Information Minister Denies Bread Supply Crisis

PM0812150588 London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic 7-13 Dec 88 pp 22-23

[Interview with Information Minister Muhammad Salman by Ibrahim 'Awad in Damascus; date not given]

[Excerpts] [Passage omitted] ['Awad] Everyone is talking about imminent solutions to the region's crisis. Can we be optimistic about tomorrow?

[Salman] President Hafiz al-Asad is the key to the region. This fact is understood by those who are working to find solutions to the Middle East crisis, though some pretend to be unaware of that fact. Those who claim that Syria is now isolated are in fact deluding themselves. This is because when Syria adheres to principles, it tends—as happened in the past—to encounter a great many smear campaigns and criticisms, but it will not deviate from its principled stands.

['Awad] How do you see the region's future after the proclamation of the Palestinian state?

[Salman] Syria has always confronted, and still confronts, the Zionist movement and its ambitions. It has engaged in the Arab-Israeli conflict at all stages in defense of the Arabs' pan-Arab existence. It has made great sacrifices and borne great burdens in terms of lives, effort, and money in its confrontation with an enemy that is determined to implement his expansionist schemes and impose his hegemony over the entire region. Syria does not consider its conflict with the enemy a conflict over partial issues but, rather, a pan-Arab conflict that concerns the existence and future of the nation. [passage omitted]

Syria has always called on world public opinion to back the just struggle for the Palestinian cause and express that backing by recognizing the Palestinian Arab people's inalienable national right, foremost among which is their right to establish their independent state in Palestine. On this basis, it is obvious for Syria to support the establishment of the Palestinian state, because this is consistent with its policy and with Arab summit resolutions as well as international legitimacy. [passage omitted]

['Awad] I have noticed a change in your dealing with journalists, especially foreign ones. I saw many of them in Damascus. Does this mean something?

[Salman] Our doors are open to all journalists in the world, except Zionist and venal journalists. I declare here that the Information Ministry in Syria is eager to welcome any journalist wishing to visit it. And it is ready to provide all facilities needed.

['Awad] But numerous papers are attacking and criticizing Syria. How do you deal with them?

[Salman] We read what is written about Syria. There are papers and publications in the United States, France, and Britain which write whatever they like because they have no representatives here. But regrettably some publications get their information from tendentious sources. Such information is remote from the truth and reality. We must draw this to the attention of those in charge, especially with regard to what is happening in the People's Assembly in particular.

There are parties and organizations that express their views and voice criticism freely and without any suspicion. We are ready to invite any journalist who wants to to visit the People's Assembly to listen to the debates held there and hear communists, unionists, and socialists expressing their opinion. Even in the Council of Ministers we criticize and discuss matters. We also differ in our views, and this proves how healthy and strong democracy in Syria is.

I would say that the dispute between us and these writers and the Arab publications revolving in their orbit is over the pan-Arab position. And I ask here the meaning of an Arab leader's coordination with the Lebanese Forces which are backed and directed by Israel. What sort of pan-Arab position could result from such coordination?

No one should keep silent about this attitude, which helps to strengthen the logic of the Camp David schemes calling for continued capitulation and concessions. These papers we created merely to cover such plots and deviation from the pan-Arab line.

['Awad] Your reference to the Lebanese Forces prompts me to ask you about the situation in Lebanon, which has been deteriorating since the failure to hold the presidential election.

[Salman] Lebanon is a small country in terms of area, but it is big because of the weight it carries at both the Arab and the international levels. If we look at the situation today, we will find that life in 75 percent of Lebanon, namely, where the Syrian and Lebanese national forces are, is proceeding satisfactorily despite the regrettable incidents that occur now and then. As for the other areas, including the part occupied by Israel and its agents in the south as well as the eastern areas which are infested with Lebanese Forces, they are the source of problems.

It must be pointed out here that, had it not been for the Lebanese Forces' presence in the eastern area [of Beirut] and their illegitimate practices and restriction of citizens' freedom, there would have been no disputes among the Lebanese themselves, and Lebanon would have been united in terms of territory and people. [passage omitted]

['Awad] I have noticed that your papers are paying attention to the bread and medicines crisis. Can you explain the two problems which preoccupy the Syrian citizen's mind?

[Salman] The claim that there is difficulty in obtaining a loaf of bread contains a lot of exaggeration. Some people interpret crowds in bakeries as evidence of a crisis. There are crowds all over the world. [passage omitted]

I would like to emphasize that bread is abundant in Syria and is under the state's control.

As for medicine, figures prove that we have allocated $230 million for the purchase of medicines, because we consider that every Syrian citizen needs them. And this happens in every other state. We sell medicines below cost price. But some medicines are smuggled into Lebanon and other neighboring states. Rulings have been issued against some officails. Some former ministers have been relieved of their positions.

Senior officails are being interrogated. And to contain the crisis we have raised the slogan of self-reliance. We have given the private sector the opportunity to build pharmaceutical plants. The construction of a laboratory in Aleppo has been completed at the cost of 42 million French francs. When work on it is fully completed next year, we will not rely on medicine imports.

Iraqi Opposition Spokesman on 'Economic Crisis'

JN0412153888 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1215 GMT 4 Dec 88

[Text] Beirut—The fascist regime in Iraq is suffering from a suffocating economic crisis due to the collapse of the national economy as well as its foreign debts, which have resulted from the huge losses during the war and from the Saddam regime's practices and tampering with Iraq's sources of wealth. In a report published today, a responsible information spokesman in the [oposition] Iraqi region's leadership of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party said that the deteriorating economic situation in Iraq has compelled the fascist regime to become involved in a number of conflicting actions that have led to complicating the economic crisis and the absence of any solutions.

This regime continues to sell properties of the state and the public sector to Iraqi, Arab, and foreign businessmen, urges the investment of foreign capitals in Iraq at the expense of Iraq's wealth, and tries to totally link the country to the capitalist system and conditions.

The spokesman added that the mad war launched against Iran by the Iraqi regime has resulted in huge Iraqi material and human losses, which are estimated, according to international statistics, at $450 billion. The information spokesman also said that during the mad war with Iran, approximately 450,000 were killed, 750,000 were wounded, and 60,000 were captured.

The spokesman also explained that the economic losses caused by the fascist regime in Iraq will make construction in the country extremely difficult. If every dollar from the oil revenues is spent on construction, Iraq, whose oil revenues amount to 3.2 billion Sterling pounds, will need 45 years to complete the reconstruction process.

AL-BA'TH Cited on 'Expected' U.S. Veto

JN1612080288 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 0545 GMT 16 Dec 88

[From the press review]

[Text] The newspaper AL-BA'TH says: The U.S. veto was expected not only because the United States supports the Zionist side but also because the United States does not pay attention to Arab blood. This is also because ever since it made itself a party alongside Israel, the United States has been genuine in taking revenge on Arabs in order to take vengeance for the colonialist forces which were compelled by Arabs to move from Arab land.

The U.S. stand in support of the Zionist aggressors represents not only a commitment to the strategic alliance with Israel but also represents the true U.S. stand on Arabs and their causes. According to U.S. norms, peace should be an Israeli one. Likewise, security, according to the U.S. viewpoint, should be granted to Israel alone.

Hence, the U.S. veto was new proof that Washington does not object to the destruction of Arab houses and to the shedding of Arab blood wherever the criminal Zionist hand may reach.

Paper Cited on Al-Asad Visit to Saudi Arabia

JN1412105588 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 0545 GMT 14 Dec 88

[From the press review]

[Text] In its editorial the newspaper AL-THAWRAH stresses that Syria has always been and will continue to be on the side of any serious Arab action to mobilize Arab resources to confront the Zionist enemy which covets all Arab territories.

AL-THAWRAH adds: Syria has welcomed and will continue to exert efforts to pool Arab efforts in order to enhance the pan-Arab stand.

AL-THAWRAH focuses on the importance of President Hafiz al-Asad's visit to Saudi Arabia. It says that this visit is within the framework of consultations, coordinating stands, and unifying Arab views on the dangers posed by the Zionist entity against the Arab nation's existence and future.

The paper adds: Syria, through the efforts of its leader Al-Asad and his strong faith in the Arabs' resources and capabilities, considers any bilateral or collective Arab action as a pan-Arab task that provides the Arab struggle with new pillars that promote joint Arab action based on Arab solidarity which has proved its effectiveness in Arab battles with the Zionist enemy.

Concluding, AL-THAWRAH says: Syria believes that Arab solidarity can bolster the Arab stand, check all enemy plans, secure the conditions of a just peace, and end the dangers of Zionist expansion and aggression.

Commentary Praises Visit

JN1512153988 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1230 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Station commentary]

[Text] Gentlemen: The working visit by the president to Saudi Arabia gains its importance within the framework of Syria's continuous efforts to crystallize joint Arab action which, in dealing with developments in the region, will be able to influence events rather than stand aloof.

This point can be explained by what the president has always affirmed—that the pan-Arab responsibility demands unity of stands, resolution, and outlook because the closer the Arabs come to solidarity and joint action on the challenges confronting them, the closer they come to achieving their objectives.

The best example of this is the glorious October [1973] war, which established a strong base to confront the Zionist enemy—its expansionist plots, intransigence, and challenge to the will of the international community and UN resolutions. That war proved that a united Arab stand is the strongest weapon to foil the Zionist onslaught and destroy the myth of the invincible Zionist army.

That glorious war proved that Arab solidarity can advance toward more progressive stands within the framework of pan-Arab commitment to defend Arab issues and the Arab future against the Zionist threat, which does not hide its designs against Arab land and its desire to impose hegemony over the Arabs, depending on its Torah-bashed plan to establish Israel from the Nile to the Euphrates.

Therefore, the Zionist danger does not exclude any of the Arabs or their countries. If Israel has signed strategic military agreements to supply its entity with means of war, aggression, terrorism, and destruction to implement its expansionist moves against the Arabs, then confronting the aggressive Zionist strategy necessarily calls for an effective Arab stand, which can only be achieved by pan-Arab commitment to joint Arab action and by realizing the real dangers of the Zionist enemy, its expansionist plots, and its declared designs to confiscate the Arab future and extend the Zionist state of affairs to it.

From this pan-Arab view of the Arab-Zionist conflict, Syria has given, and will always give, the priority in its efforts to confront and foil the Zionist threats. At the same time, it gives a similar priority to joint Arab action within the framework of its understanding of the nature of our conflict with the Zionist enemy.

Through the equation of unity of the Arab stands and massing and directing Arab resources to the battle to foil the Zionist onslaught, the concept of the pan-Arab character of the battle will ripen. The foundations for this concept were laid by the glorious October war, which forcefully opened the door of the future to liberate the land and regain rights.

In light of these pan-Arab principles of Syria's line, any working visit and effort made by leader Al-Asad will work to the benefit of our Arab nation and its just causes in liberation and achieving its pan-Arab objectives.

Afghanistan

'Extremist' Missile Attack on Laghman Kills 9

LD1512175288 Kabul Domestic Service in Pashto 1530 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Excerpts] BAKHTAR, quoting competent Armed Forces sources, reports: Blows by the Armed Forces in the vicinity of Qandahar city and Daman district resulted in a number of elements linked to extremists and opposition groups being killed.

Three enemy forces were captured, 60 rocket shells and 6 boxes of ammunition were seized, and some rockets, a recoilless gun, and 3 hideouts were destroyed. [passage omitted]

According to a report from Laghman Province, extremist elements today fired 450 surface-to-surface missiles at Laghman city; 9 of our compatriots, including women and children, were martyred, 11 others injured, and 13 houses partially destroyed or damaged.

Internal disagreements between extremists groups and armed opposition elements intensify every day, causing heavy losses to both sides. As a result of bloody and armed clashes between extremists groups of Gulbuddin and Khalis, and also groups of Hezbollah and Harakat in the provinces of Zabol, Ghazni, Konduz, Baghlan, and Badakhshan provinces, a total of 94 persons from both sides were killed, and 52 others were seriously injured.

An arms and ammunition dump in Ghazni province, belonging to a Gulbuddin extremist group, was destroyed.

Explosives, Chemicals Seized in Kabul

LD1512141188 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari 1330 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] The state security organs captured 200 kg of explosive substances, poisonous chemicals, and [name indistinct] bombs today, thus preventing the occurrence of tragic incidents in Kabul city. The BIA military section reports that individuals belonging to Gulbuddin's criminal extremist band stored plastic explosives and 200 meters of [word indistinct] fuse, 15 [word indistinct] adjusted bombs, 18 [word indistinct] mines, 1 bottle of a poisonous chemical substance, 1 communications unit, and 1 pistol in Ward No 7, Kabul city, and intended to commit other unforgivable explosions and crimes against our peaceloving citizens including children, women, and old men.

However, the state security personnel took timely measures and captured the carriers of the explosives. The individuals belong to a terrorist group called Shefa belonging to Gulbuddin's extemist band, whose headquarters are located in Peshawar, Pakistan. The band is entrusted with the task of organizing terror, explosions, and intimidation in the Republic of Afghanistan. The incident is under investigation.

Wakil Addresses UN on Palestinian Issue

LD1612093988 Kabul BAKHTAR in English 0500 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] Kabul, Dec. 15, BAKHTAR: 'Abdul Wakil, minister of foreign affairs of the Republic of Afghanistan, delivered his speech to the 43rd session of UN General Assembly held in Geneva on Palestine question.

He expressed his sincere and heartfelt felicitations on the statement issued on Nov 15, 1988 regarding the establishment of the independent state of Palestine. Based on having friendly and diplomatic relations with the Palestine Liberation Organisation, PLO, the government of the Republic of Afghanistan announced its recognition of the formation of an independent state of Palestine.

The new political thinking in international relations brought about positive tendencies towards the solution of regional conflicts, which provided for great prospects in furbishing [as received] hot beds of tension. Salient examples of it are the signing of Geneva Accords for the political solution of the situation around Afghanistan, the 43rd resolution of UN General Assembly on Afghanistan, the speech delivered to the 43rd UN session by Mikhail Gorbachev on the peaceful solution of regional conflicts including the political solution of the situation around Afghanistan, the Afghan foreign minister recalled.

The cause of unrest and instability in the Middle East lies in that the established rights of the people of Palestine are denied and the occupation of Palestine and other Arab lands by Israelis has been continued, stressed 'Abdul Wakil in his speech.

151st Violation Note Sent to UNGOMAP

LD1612094088 Kabul BAKHTAR in English 0454 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] Kabul, Dec. 15, BAKHTAR—151st notice of the Republic of Afghanistan on flagrant violations by Pakistan of the Geneva agreements was given to the United Nations Good Offices Mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan, UNGOMAP, in Kabul today.

The notice gives information on ten instances of violations by Pakistan of Article 2, Document 1 of the Geneva agreements.

The UNGOMAP has been asked to investigate the cases and convey the findings to the Republic of Afghanistan and the representative of the UN General Assembly.

Envoy to GDR Welc[omes] Gorbachev Proposal

AU1412151788 East B[erlin] in German 13 Dec 88 p 7

[Text] East Berlin (AD[N]—The Republic of Afghanistan supports the proposal[ ] of Mikhail Gorbachev, general secretary of the CPSU [Central Committee and chairman of the Presidium of t[he USSR Supreme Soviet, for a complete ceasefire in Afghanistan as of 1 January 1989, which was presented [at the 43d session of the UN General Assembly on 7 December.

This was stated by Jayl[ani Bakhtari, ambassador extraordinary and plenipoten[tiary of the Republic of Afghanistan, at a press conf[erence in Berlin on Monday [12 December].

Visa Lines Continue as Soviet Withdrawal Nears

BK1612084188 Hong Kong AFP in English 0619 GMT 16 Dec 88

[By Kate Webb]

[Excerpts] Kabul, Afghanistan, Dec 16 (AFP)—Some 200 Afghans a day are applying for visas to leave the country as the deadline nears for the Soviet troop withdrawal from Afghanistan.

With eight weeks to February 15, the day Moscow says the last Soviet soldier will be gone, most visa applicants lining up outside the gates of the Indian Embassy in Kabul's Shahre-nau district say they are fleeing uncertainty.

"Everyone's got their fingers crossed," said an Afghan of Indian origin. "No one knows what is going to happen. It could be chaos for a couple of months or longer."

Many believe Soviet Ambassador Yuliy Vorontsov's last-minute negotiations with leaders of the mujahidin resistance, who have been battling Soviet and Afghan troops for the past nine years, could result in the installation of a mujahidin or mujahidin-dominated government in Kabul.

They know that the government of President Najibullah, which controls Kabul, has not been party to the Soviet-mujahidin talks, and some fear civil war.

Sources at the Indian Embassy, the only foreign mission here still issuing visas, say 90 to 100 are granted a day, and that extra staff have been taken on to handle the rush. [passage omitted]

Indian Airlines, which until two months ago ran flights three times a week to Delhi, stopped its service citing dangers of mujahidin rockets and Stinger missiles supplied to the mujahidin by the United States.

But the small but steady exodus has not become a flood from this city of two million, described by one European diplomat as a "city in waiting." Life goes on with deceptive normality.

Kabul's white and yellow taxis vie with military convoys for road space, and the city's two largest hotels—the Kabul and the Continental—host wedding parties almost nightly.

In the bazaars, housewives and traders haggle over food prices rocketing daily with the condition of the roads leading to neighbouring Pakistan and the Soviet Union, lifelines for such basics as flour and fuel. [sentence as received]

"What can we do?" said a minor civil servant closely tied to the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), branded by the mujahidin as a Soviet puppet creation. "Everything is happening outside the country. We can only listen to the radio, to BBC, Radio Moscow, to any news from outside, where the fate of Kabul is being decided."

The official said he could not apply for a passport but that he was trying to get his family out, and diplomats here confirm that no general clearance has been given for government employees wanting passports.

In many government offices, Afghan official sources say, work is proceeding at a snail's pace. Said one: "They may be playing chess in a lot of offices, but it is because the real chess game is being played by the big powers."

Mr. Vorontsov, in his talks, and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev on December 7, have spoken of a coalition government without specifying whether it would include the 200,000-member PDPA.

But fewer and fewer diplomats here believe the PDPA's inclusion is in the cards, some speculating about an arranged deal under which the Afghan Army could be joined with moderate mujahidin leaders at least as a stop-gap solution until the Soviet troop withdrawal is complete. [passage omitted]

"There will be civil war if the (Vorontsov) negotiations don't take the PDPA and the Army into account," said 43-year-old Kurshani Mahbubullah, leader of a left-wing party here and a leading parliamentarian. "The Army is not weak. I don't know if the members of the PDPA are afraid, but the Soviet Union cannot be indifferent to their fate. They cannot just abandon them."

"I hope this catastrophe does not happen (civil war)," Senate Vice President S.A.A. Shahrestani, an academic-turned senator, said.

"Perhaps it is right to be uneasy, but I must be optimistic, there must be light after the shadows, even a small light is hope, and after nine years of fighting I believe the hope is in that everyone wants peace."

Professor Shahrestani joked that if some leaders did not want peace, then "surely someone could shoot them, because they are so few."

India

Spokesman Welcomes U.S. Stand on PLO

BK1512125688 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1230 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] An official spokesman said in New Delhi today that India welcomes the change in the U.S. stand on the PLO problem if press reports from Washington to this effect are correct.

The spokesman was responding to queries by newsmen on the reported U.S. decision to enter into a substantive dialogue with the PLO on the West Asia peace process. Several other countries have also welcomed the U.S. decision.

GNLF Gains Absolute Majority in West Bengal

BK1512161088 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Excerpt] In West Bengal, the Gurkha National Liberation Front [GNLF] has secured a landslide victory in the first ever election to the 42-member Gurkha Hill Council. It has won an absolute majority bagging 26 out of 28 seats, elections for which were held on Tuesday. Two seats have gone in favor of the CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist]. The state government will nominate 14 members of the council.

In Darjeeling subdivision, out of 14 seats 12 have gone to the GNLF and 2 to the CPI-M. The GNLF candidates have been declared elected in six constituencies of Kurseong subdivision and eight in Kalimpong subdivision. [passage omitted]

'Terrorist' Killed, 21 Arrested in Punjab

BK1612125488 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1230 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] In Punjab, one more hard-core terrorist, Lakhwinder Singh, was killed in an encounter in Amritsar this afternoon. One Chinese assault rifle and two loaded magazines were recovered from his possession.

The security forces meanwhile have arrested 21 terrorists during raids in different places in the state.

No Response to Strike Call in Tamil Nadu

BK1612081588 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0730 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] In Tamil Nadu, the 24-hour bundh [strike] called by the Vanniar Sangam [a communal organization] has evoked no response so far. In Madras, vehicular traffic is normal. All central, state, private and business establishments are functioning as usual. The state-owned transport corporation buses are plying with police escorts. Train services—both suburban and long distance—are running normally.

According to the police, barring a few stray incidents of stone throwing in the Vanniar dominated districts, the situation is normal.

USSR To Buy 44,000 Tonnes of Coffee

BK1612042688 Hong Kong AFP in English 0032 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] New Delhi, Dec 16 (AFP)—The Soviet Union has contracted to buy some 44,000 tonnes of coffee from India, the PRESS TRUST OF INDIA (PTI) said.

G.V. Krishnan, chairman of the state-run coffee board, was quoted as saying in Bangalore Thursday [15 December] that the deal, worth an estimated 106 million dollars, was signed in the southern city.

Mr. Krishnan reportedly stated that the supplies would be made in the form of 40,000 tonnes of green coffee and 4,000 tonnes of instant coffee.

Iran

Musavi Assesses 'State of the Armed Forces'

LD1512143388 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] The fourth course of the Command College and Staff College of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, began this morning with ceremonies attended by the prime minister, defense minister, the IRGC commander in chief, the imam's representative in the Supreme Defense Council and a number of IRGC and Armed Forces commanders. Please listen to a report on this subject:

According to a Central News Unit report, during these ceremonies, Imam Hoseyn University's supervisor—after outlining the history of the founding of the Command and Staff College and its activities—said: Noting the present state of the command college in other countries in the world, efforts have been made to set up an appropriate organization to attract lecturers and students and to regularize the affairs of this college which, up to now, has accommodated 20 battalion and company command courses.

Then Prime Minister Mir Hoseyn Musavi expressed congratulations on the anniversary of the happy birth of holy Zeynab—may God's peace be upon her—and Nurses Day.

He then addressed the state of the Armed Forces of the country. Emphasizing the importance of management issues and particularly Armed Forces management, which manifests itself in the form of command, he said: Success in progress is achieved when scientific and practical instructions and teachings merge with theoretical issues.

The prime minister added: The Islamic Republic of Iran—as an independent force [as heard] which has a worldwide mission and does not want to submit to any country—is situated geographically and militarily in a sensitive region—between countries which have different types of political systems and which are even hostile—and in this respect Iran must stand on its own feet culturally and economically so that it may also be strong in the military field.

Concluding, he stressed the need for a bond [peyvand] between the Armed Forces and the Guards Corps, and he said: The Guards Corps—having had the opportunity to complete its training courses and to further its progress—should use all available resources. Since the Guards Corps has not found the opportunity yet for scientific organization [sazmandehi-ye 'elmi], there are some weaknesses to be found in the IRGC.

But, it is hoped that these will be eliminated through creative thinking and the brotherly goodwill and strong bond between the Armed Forces and the Guards Corps.

Red Cross Committee Notified of POW Situation

LD1512195988 Tehran IRNA in English 1815 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] Tehran, Dec. 15, IRNA—"The Islamic Republic holds the Iraq regime responsible for aborting the agreed repatriation of disabled POW's", the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was again notified today.

The foreign minister's previous complaint to the president of the Geneva-based agency was on 29 November.

'Ali Akbar Velayati pointed to Cornelio Sommaruga, Iraq's breaching of the understanding reached at Geneva and its continued refusal to release a complete list of all ill and disabled POWs by December 5.

"Iran honoured its commitment by listing all ill and disabled Iraqi POWs" said Velayati and urged the ICRC to force Baghdad to undertake its commitments.

"What guarantees exist for the exchange of POWs in the light of Iraq's continued violations?" Velayati asked Sommaruga.

At Geneva last November, Iran and Iraq had agreed to swap ill and disabled POWs in ten batches, but after three stages of exchange, Iran was forced to suspend the operation due to Baghdad's unexplained detention of over half of the number of POWs in each batch every time.

In return for 157 Iraqis, Baghdad released only 57 of the agreed 411 disabled Iranian POWs, while it continues to hold thousands of unregistered disabled Iranians at secret camps.

It is also worth recalling that several disabled Iraqi POWs, as was witnssed by ICRC officials in Iran, pleaded for political asylum at the eleventh hour and were granted, while a few as testified by doctors were cured of their diseases by the time the operations got underway.

Tudeh Party Delivers Message on Executions

LD1412174788 (Clandestine) Radio of the Iranian Toilers in Persian 0230 GMT 14 Dec 88

[Message from the Tudeh Party Central Committee Politburo]

[Text] The national tragedy of the mass murder of Tudeh Party political prisoners and others in the Islamic regime's jails have shocked the freedom-loving people of Iran and the world. The unpopular and tyrannical regime has totally neglected the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights—the 40th anniversary of which is being celebrated all over the world—and has totally neglected the most basic legal and moral rights of these individuals whose only guilt is their struggle for the well-being of the deprived classes in society.

These individuals are sent before firing squads without any trial. This unprecedented mass murder is still in progress.

Compatriots! Khomeyni and his oppressive apparatus are committing these horrifying crimes at a time when they are facing profound and gigantic socioeconomic and political crisis. In order to rid themselves of these bottlenecks, they have sought refuge with global world-devourers. In reality, they have sacrificed the political prisoners under the feet of global imperialism.

By these bloody crimes, the regime seeks to silence the protesting voice of millions of Iranians and to continue its policies to prevent the masses' achievement of democratic freedoms.

It was in no way accidental that our party, at last December's plenum, emphasized the need to struggle for freedom under the present conditions. It was in no way accidental that the Tudeh Party of Iran urged all political parties and organizations, and all freedom-seeking individuals to gather around the axis of peace and freedom, and to take united action. Saving the lives of political

prisoners was one of the main topics for action we suggested. In these painful days, we consider it our duty to emphasize these issues once again—so that the past may become a guiding light for the future—and to place more emphasis on the necessity of united and harmonious struggle.

Dear compatriots and fellow strugglers! The Iranian Tudeh Party Central Committee Politburo strongly condemns this beastly crime and urges all democratic political organizations to intensify their struggle against the antihuman regime ruling the beloved homeland. This struggle is possible only through relentles efforts toward freedom.

When we emphasize the necessity of rejuvenating democratic freedoms in society, we of the Tudeh Party are talking about guarantees of freedom for all social strata, all political organizations and parties, regardless of their ideologies and modes of thought. We strongly oppose any monopoly and self-centeredness in the face of this vital and fatal issue. We always have opposed this and will continue to do so.

The Tudeh Party of Iran, from the day of its founding, has taken steps in this direction and has sacrificed much in this course. During the past 4 decades, our party has lost thousands of members and sympathizers in the course of its struggles against tyrannical regimes. These individuals were some of the most valuable children of the masses. No wonder our party is nicknamed the Party of Martyrs.

Nearly 6 years have passed since the regime's fascist-style onslaught against our party. During this period there has not been a single year in which members of our party have not been martyred during their struggle for the well-being of the deprived and toiling classes. The massacre of members of the Tudeh party continues without end.

The recent execution of political prisoners in Iran is merely a continuation of the inhumane policies of the regime of Velayat-e Faqih [supremacy of jurisconsult]. This national tragedy, which has made thousands of families mournful, is evidence of the regime's insecurity and weakness and their beastly fear of the masses' anger and fury.

The regime's oppressive organs are increasingly resorting to terrorism to lengthen the life of the regime of Velayat-e Faqih and are not really showing much inovation with their recent murders of political prisoners. Experiences in other Third World countries reveal that a government may rule for a while through terror and tyranny, but the gradual demise of an unpopular regime cannot be prevented.

This is an historical inevitability. No force can stop the movement of history's wheel towards freedom, independence, social justice, and peace.

We Tudeh party members will lead the popular struggle against tyranny and oppression. The selfless Tudeh party members have shown that they are willing to sacrifice even their lives in the course of their struggle for the well being of the toilers.

Our party's history has been written with the blood of thousands of famous or unknown martyrs. When forced to choose between honesty, self-respect, and objectives of a shameful life, the absolute majority of Tudeh party members have chosen the first option. This is a cause of pride for our party.

The Tudeh Central Committee Politburo, with utmost sorrow and regret, conveys its condolences to the families of all recent Party martyrs.

Comrades! Let us renew our pledge before the chaste blood of Tudeh party heroes to continue their proud course of struggle. We renew our pledge to continue and intensify our struggle against the beastly regime of Khomeyni.

The Iranian people will never forget the struggle of their children. We will intensify our struggles and try to stop the regime's atrocities. This is nothing but a struggle to topple that regime. We will revenge the blood of our fellow-strugglers.

Long live the names of our martyrs!

Death to the anti-humane regime of Khomeyni!

Long live the Tudeh Party of Iran, the party of legend and martyrdom!

[Signed] The Tudeh Party of Iran Politburo, Azar 1367 [22 November-21 December 1988]

Pakistan

Baluchistan Cabinet Resigns; Elections Planned

BK1612023488 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] The Baluchistan cabinet, led by Zafarullah Khan Jamali, has tendered its resignation to the provincial governor. However, the governor has asked the chief minister and his associates to discharge their duties until the formation of a new administration.

Given the backdrop of the incidents that led to the dissolution of the provincial assembly, Zafarullah Khan Jamali said in a statement that a situation was created wherein he saw no other choice but to advise the governor to dissolve the provincial assembly under Section 112-1 of the Constitution, so as to enable the members to seek the mandate of the people anew. He added that the provincial governor has already said the election schedule will be announced on the 29th of this month.

Bhutto Addresses Newsmen on Baluchistan Assembly
BK1512160488 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] The Prime Minister, Ms Benazir Bhutto, today said that the action taken by the Baluchistan governor and the chief minister is in accordance with the Constitution and we cannot intervene in this case in view of democratic traditions, the Constitution, and provincial autonomy. She was talking to newsmen at the Parliament House [in Islamabad] after the National Assembly session.

The prime minister said:

[Begin Bhutto recording] If anyone believes that the governor did not act according to the Constitution, then the courts could be approached. If any one believes that he [outgoing Baluchistan Chief minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali] was not the chief minister, then again the courts could be approached. But in our view, which is a political view, the people constitute the biggest court. If anyone thinks that an excess has been committed against him, then he should go to the people's court. We should not be afraid of the people's court. The people are to be trusted.

If there is some provision in the Constitution about provinces, then whoever talks about the Constitution should accept this provision. If anyone does not like the Constitution, then we have not closed the doors [for amending the Constitution]. What does the Constitution say? What does democracy say?

Now, you will see that we will never abuse power or work against democracy or violate the Constitution or violate the provincial autonomy as provided for in the Constitution. The Constitution allowed what Mr Jamali did. The Constitution allowed what the governor did. We cannot intervene on account of all three platforms of democracy, the Constitution, and the provincial autonomy.

Now the decision belongs to the people's court, whatever it decides. If any one has some complaints, then he should take it to the people. If anyone wants to defend this action, then he should also go to the people. And, if any one does not like the present provision of the Constitution that the Governor can do it [dissolve the provincial assembly] on the advice of the chief minister, then he should introduce a bill in the parliament regarding this, sit down with us and discuss it. We are ready to discuss all situations. [end recording]

The prime minister said that we should keep in mind what is in the interest of the country and democracy. She added that attempts had been made right from the beginning to compel the federal government to intervene in provincial affairs. However, the federal government is determined to respect the Constitution and democracy. Ms Benazir Bhutto said we have accepted the decision of the majority in Baluchistan which was taken inside the assembly, not outside it.

Baluchistan Governor Defends Assembly Dissolution
BK1512161488 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] Baluchistan Governor Retired General Mohammad Musa told newsmen in Islamabad this evening that he had dissolved the Baluchist Assembly on the advice of the chief minister in accordance with the Constitution and in the larger national interest. He emphasized that no intervention was made on behalf of the federal government. He did not apprise the president or the prime minister before taking this decision because there was no need to do so according to the Constitution.

The governor clarified that he had no alternative but to accept the chief minister's advice because the assembly would have dissolved by itself within 48 hours.

Describing the background of the political situation, he said Mr Zafarullah Khan Jamali's provincial government enjoyed a narrow majority in the beginning. He consulted other political parties to further strengthen and consolidate his government. The chief minister told him last night that his talks with the Jamiyat-i Ulema-i Islam—Fazlur Rahman Group—had failed and he had been compelled to recommend to him in the larger interest of the province that the provincial assembly is dissolved.

Retired General Mohammad Musa said that as far the federal government is concerned, it has made it clear that it would not intervene in the province's affairs. The provinces have complete freedom to form provincial cabinets to serve the people of their region. He said he is going to Quetta tomorrow where he will hold talks with the political parties to form a caretaker government. He said the caretaker government would be set up by the 22d of this month. He added that the election program would be announced by the 29th of this month.

Restoration of Baluchistan Assembly Demanded
BK1512162888 Islamabad Domestic Service in English 1600 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] Leaders of the opposition in the National Assembly have demanded immediate and unconditional restoration of Baluchistan Assembly. Addressing a news conference in Islamabad this afternoon, they expressed the view that dissolution of the provincial assembly on advice of the controversial chief minister was not legally binding.

Those who addressed the news conference were the leader of the opposition in the National Assembly, Mr Ghulam Haider Wain; leader of JUI [Jamiyat-i Ulema-i

Islam] Maulana Fazlur Rahman; PDP [Pakistan Democratic Party] chief Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan; JUP [Jamiyat-i Ulema-i Pakistan] leader Maulana Abdus Sattar Khan Niazi; ANP [Awami National Party] chief Khan Abdul Wali Khan; and leader of IJI [Islamic Jamhoori Ittehad, Democratic Alliance] parliamentary party Chaudhury Shujat Hussain.

Mr Ghulam Haider Wain announced that the Pakistan Muslim League has decided to expell [outgoing Baluchistan chief minister] Mr Zafarullah Khan Jamali from the Muslim League due to his undemocratic behavior.

Opposition To Boycott Parliament Budget Session
BK1612035688 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] Islamic Jamhoori Ittehad [IJI] has decided to boycott the National Assembly budget session in protest against the dissolution of the Baluchistan Assembly. The IJI has claimed that Jamiyat-i Ulema-i Islam Fazlur Rahman group, Awami National Party, Baluchistan National Alliance, Pakistan Jamhuri Party, and some independent members have also decided to boycott the session.

Kabul Protest Over Downed Aircraft 'Baseless'
BK1612023788 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] Pakistan has rejected a Kabul administration protest made on Monday [12 December], in which it was alleged that two Pakistani aircraft entered (Lo Waleswali Khowst) area and fired on an Afghan aircraft, damaging the aircraft and killing 25 persons. The Afghan charge d'affaires was summoned to the Foreign Office yesterday [15 December] and was told that these allegations were investigated and found baseless.

Spokesman Hails U.S. Decision on Talks With PLO
BK1612041688 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] A Foreign Office spokesman said in Islamabad that Pakistan welcomes the statements of President Reagan and Secretary of State George Shultz that said the United States has decided to hold talks with the PLO. The spokesman said this decision is a step in the right direction and will greatly improve the possibilities of a just, comprehensive, and durable solution to the Middle East problem.

Pakistan believes that the talks between the United States and the PLO will begin to pave the way for convening an international conference soon in which all the parties concerned, including the PLO, will have equal participation.

Bhutto Comments on Ishaq Khan Speech 14 Dec
BK1412112988 Islamabad Domestic Service in English 1100 GMT 14 Dec 88

[Text] In a brief chat with newsmen the Prime Minister, Ms Benazir Bhutto, said the president's address was a comprehensive reflection of the policies and priorities of the people's government to be followed in the coming years.

Bhutto Thanks Gandhi for Congratulatory Message
BK1512050088 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 15 Dec 88

[Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has said the democratically-elected Government of Pakistan attaches great importance to establishing cooperative, good-neighborly, and friendly relations with India to serve the cause of peace and stability in the South Asian region. She made these observations in her reply to the congratulatory message Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had sent to her on her assumption of the office of the prime minister.

Thanking the Indian prime minister for his message of good wishes, Benazir Bhutto said the Simla Agreement provides a solid framework for the consolidation of bilateral relations, because this agreement has helped the two countries in avoiding confrontation and in making progress in certain fields of bilateral cooperation.

She appreciated Rajiv Gandhi's sentiments about Pakistan's unity and solidarity, and she reciprocated similar sentiments for the security and solidarity of India.

Benazir Bhutto said she is looking forward to meeting the Indian prime minister on the occasion of the SAARC summit conference beginning in Islamabad on 29 December.

The prime minister has also thanked Sheikh Hasina Wajed, the president of the Bangladesh Awami League, for the congratulatory message the latter sent on Benazir Bhutto's appointment as prime minister. In her reply, the prime minister said the people of Pakistan have placed a heavy burden on the Pakistan People's Party to take the country out of difficult political and economic crises, and the support of the well-wishers of a democratic Pakistan provides encouragement to the party in this regard.

Minister Announces Removal of Media Restrictions
BK1512012088 Islamabad Domestic Service in English 1600 GMT 14 Dec 88

[Text] There will be no restrictions on the participation of any individual in the official media, particularly PBC [Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation] and PTV [Pakistan

Television] with immediate effect. This was stated by the minister of state for information and broadcasting, Mr Javed Jabbar, in a statement in Islamabad today. He said the step has been taken to implement the manifesto of the Pakistan People's Party and in fulfillment of the commitment regarding freedom of speech made by Prime Minister Ms Benazir Bhutto.

The decision effectively abolishes the (?list) of an unofficial blacklist comprising names of leading writers, poets, dramatists, journalists, and citizens who were deliberately excluded from appearance on PBC and PTV for over 11 years as part of the policy of discrimination on the basis of political dissent.

Six Killed in Karachi Shootings; Curfew Imposed

BK1612031088 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] A press note issued by the Karachi administration says that last night some people, allegedly riding in a car, resorted to indiscriminate firing on two intersections—on Allama Rashid Turabi Road and near Ziauddin hospital. Several people sitting in the hotels (?of the area) became the target of terrorism.

Six people succumbed to injuries and nine were injured. The press note also says that a curfew was imposed immediately in Orangi, North Nazimabad, Nazimabad, some areas of Gul Bazaar, Khwaja Ajmer Nagri, and Shah Faisal colony as a precautionary measure to protect the lives and property of the people. Police and law enforcement agencies are patrolling the entire city.

[Hong Kong AFP in English
2023 GMT 15 Dec notes:" The attack was the first since Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto took over on December 1 and was believed to be the result of ethnic tension in the city following a clash between Urdu-speaking Mohajirs and Punjabi students."]

Prime Minister Ms Benazir Bhutto expressed her heavy anguish and sorrow over the killing of innocent people in the indiscriminate firing. According to a spokesman of the Sind administration, she said a democratic government cannot be cowed down by this sort of cowardly acts. The spokesman said she directed the Sind government to take stern action to maintain law and order and to apprehend the culprits. The spokesman said she had expressed her sympathy and condolences to the bereaved and affected families.

In Karachi, the Sind chief minister has strongly condemned these two incidents of indiscriminate firing by unidentified assailants in which innocent people were killed and wounded. The chief minister said this inhuman act was committed by those defeatist elements who want to destroy law and order, which has been established after the setting up of the democratic government in the country. He said the administration has been given clear instructions to arrest the culprits.

Sri Lanka

Opposition Rally Bombed; Candidate Escapes Unhurt

BK1612163288 Hong Kong AFP in English 1629 GMT 16 Dec 88

[Text] Colombo, Dec 16 (AFP)—Up to 25 people were wounded when unidentified men lobbed bombs here Friday [16 December] at an opposition presidential election rally, witnesses said.

The meeting near the Ratmalana Domestic Airport was being addressed by former Premier Sirima Bandaranaike when two bombs were hurled and exploded. She was immediately pushed into a car and driven away to safety by her aides, they said.

"At least 15 to 25 people were injured as the bombs exploded," said a witness, adding that the blasts led to panic and confusion as people began to run in all directions.

Mrs. Bandaranaike, who heads the main opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), is one of the three candidates in Monday's presidential election. She was last prime minister from 1970 to 1977.

The two bombs exploded some 50-100 yards (metres) from the Dias. Police said three men had received "fairly serious" injuries.

Mrs. Bandaranaike had arrived at Ratmalana after addressing another SLFP rally at nearby Dompe District, which passed off peacefully. Friday is the last day for campaigning. Earlier Friday, a bomb went off at Mrs. Bandaranaike's rally at southern Matara District, but no one was injured. No one claimed responsibility for the attack.

The Janatha Vimukti Peramuna (JVP, or People's Liberation Front), an anti-government Sinhalese group, has threatened to sabotage the election. It killed six SLFP members late Thursday in the island's troubled south. The JVP has been blamed for more than 1,200 deaths over the past 17 months.

Delhi: Security Forces Kill 21 JVP Escapees

BK1612033888 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 16 Dec 88

text The Sri Lankan security forces have shot dead 21 JVP [Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna] extremists who escaped from the maximum security Welikade prison on Tuesday night [13 December].

A government statement in Colombo said about 130 of the 221 escaped prisoners had been rounded up. According to military sources, the others were still at large.